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ALBERT CHEVALIER

ALBERT CHEVALIER

A RECORD
BY
HIMSELF

BIOGRAPHICAL AND OTHER CHAPTERS
BY
BRIAN DALY

ILLUSTRATED

LONDON:

John Macqueen

HASTINGS HOUSE, NORFOLK STREET, STRAND

1896

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TO THE PUBLIC.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Whatever I am, you have made me. The greatest compliment an artist can receive is your encouragement. I have done my best up till now—*now* I will try and do better.

It has been said that the road to a certain warm place is "paved with good intentions." I cannot believe it, but, if such be the case, then have I very largely contributed towards the path-paving of the thoroughfare to that undesirable permanent address. I am not exactly a fatalist, but I feel that I must go on as I have commenced.

With your assistance, I will defy superstition, and only count the fatal flagstones when I fail to please you.

I am proud to sign myself,

Your servant,

ALBERT CHEVALIER.

P.S.—After reading the proofs of my friend Daly's share in this book—I refer particularly to certain personal eulogies—I have come to the conclusion that his "good intentions" must have left him well on the road,

with "*some of all professions that,*" according to Macbeth's Porter, "*go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire!*" I wish you to remember that I am only responsible for the *anecdotal* portion—the remainder of the work is my friend's. He is a brave man, and knows not fear.

PROEM.

[To the One from the Other.]

*Give me your hand in clasp strong, proud and royal,
 Such as men give that have in them the king,
 With a high sense of brotherhood right loyal,
 Our friendship perfecting.
 This be my plea (if there be needed any) :
 Who finds a friend has found in life a grace ;
 And I am only one among the many
 That owe you time and place.*

*Herein the tributes from a real heart streaming
 Are small return : but they may be a sign,
 That often just a little of your dreaming
 Will weigh and count with mine
 In those deep harmonies that men call feeling,
 On which glows God's indubitable star ! . . .
 Give me your hand—there is no touch of healing
 More potent, near or far.*

BRIAN DALY.

Isleworth.

February, 1895.

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PART I.—ACTOR.

Preliminaries.

Albert Chevalier: a Record.

PART I.—ACTOR.

Preliminaries.

I.

THE BOOK MAKES ITS BOW.

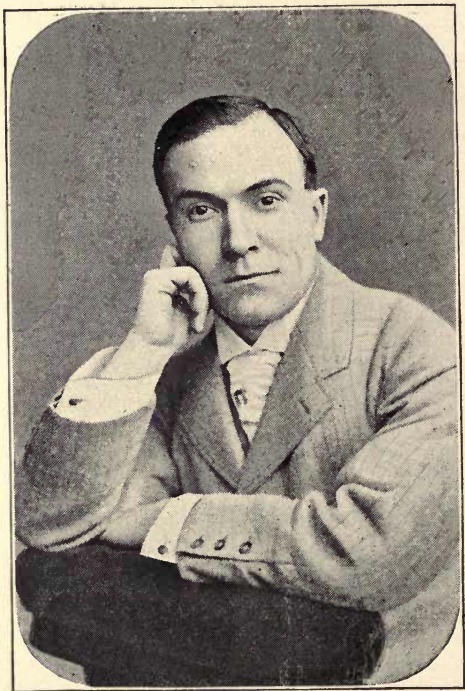
There isn't a great deal of me. I am not a portly, well-developed, aristocratic Gentleman, with an air of superiority, or with a pompous desire to be reckoned as clever and important as other members of my class. My dress is as simple as my pretensions, which are to place upon record, without ostentation, a brief survey of an actor's public career—a simple, earnest life, in which the

pulse of an artistic temperament stirs ever with convincing throbs.

Somehow, I feared that I should never reach maturity ; so many circumstances combined to delay my growth. You see, I was not more than two chapters old, when I was very unkindly hid away in a drawer for a long period. Not receiving any nourishment from the pen which had fed me, I ceased to develop—but as there was no waste I did not die—so remained *in statu quo*, among a lot of other immaturities of various and doubtful ages, until one day I was suddenly jerked out of my dark prison, turned over, scrutinized, branded with scratches and blots, and finally found myself rapidly expanding into my present condition.

My present condition. Well, of course I had to undergo an operation, but it was not unpleasant ; in fact, it was rather refreshing to be transferred bodily from the irregular manuscript to nice, clean apartments such as I occupy now.

Just step in, will you ? This way ; turn once to the left ; allow me to introduce you to



ALBERT CHEVALIER.

[Now that the introduction is complete, the chronicler remembers that among his notes is one having reference to a ludicrous incident related to him by Chevalier soon after its occurrence. As an "introduction" was responsible for it, let it be produced here, and in Chevalier's own words.]

II.

AN INTRODUCTION.

"I was singing at the Alhambra, Brighton, in the winter of 1892, and owing to a slight throat-trouble, I had a night off. The following evening the manager (Harry Lundy) and I were chatting together inside the house, when a swellish young fellow left the bar, and crossing to Lundy, asked if 'Chevalier was on to-night.' Of course he didn't know me in my non-professional disguise. Lundy replied, 'Yes, he'll be on at so-and-so,' mentioning the time I was due. His questioner looked dubious, and remarked, 'He was off last night—drunk, I suppose?' As he turned away, Lundy winked at me, and touching the young fellow, who stopped, said :

" 'Allow me to introduce you to Mr. Chevalier !'

"I inclined my head, and judge of my surprise, when, without turning a hair, he did likewise, and in a per-

fectly unconcerned way, as if he had known me for years, said :

" 'How do you do? Hope you're well.' "

" I liked that man."

III.

FROM "TURN" TO "TURN," AND WHAT BEFELL.

I distinctly remember the night this book was first suggested to me by Chevalier. We were going from "turn" to "turn,"—from the "Cambridge" to the "Canterbury," and, to be precise, it was just when the brougham was about half-way over London Bridge. A dark November night, and a fog slowly spreading its yellow shroud over and along the highway. Inside the brougham, the comedian, muffled to the nose, was growing anxious as the moments approached for his appearance at the "Canterbury," for the coachman could make but slow progress through the dense fog, destined, before we reached the hall I have mentioned, to get us into a little trouble.

"I think the book would be interesting, don't you?" he asked.

"It ought to be," was my reply.

"Well," he continued, reflectingly, "we shall have a bit of trouble, I'm afraid. As you know, I am not a methodical man, and diaries and such things I never kept—at any rate not for long at a time."

"Never mind," I answered, "we must utilise the material we have. I don't think posterity will be kept in ignorance of your work."

"Not if it reads all the interviews. But in a hundred years hence people will surely wonder at the conflicting stories told of professional people. Most of the interviewers I have met are very good fellows and mean well, but oftentimes some have a knack of distorting one's assertions, and as these are imported immediately into a hundred other papers and the importation entails a certain amount of local tinkering, we get the credit of having either very bad memories or an inventive faculty known as lying."

Here the brougham left the bridge, and moved towards the Southwark Bridge Road.

It looked very miserable and uninviting through the fast-closed windows, and we had lapsed into a mutual silence, when a sudden jolt of the vehicle, followed by a sharp pull up, roused us rather rudely from our meditations.

Now the road we were travelling was very dark, and

just by a railway arch which spanned the thoroughfare, it was almost totally so. An object stationed in the centre of the road was rendered invisible in the shadow of the arch, and the coachman had driven into it.

"Good gracious ! what's that ?" said Chevalier, starting up as the carriage came to a halt.

A reply reached us from the outer darkness, in a thick, beery voice, as the owner addressed the coachman.

"Orlright ! You've done a blanked fine thing, ain't yer ? 'Old on a bit now—let's see the damidge."

This sounded serious to us. Chevalier still wore his coster suit under a great coat, and reminding me of this, added—" This chap musn't catch sight of me, or there'll be the deuce to pay."

" You sit well back," I said, " and I'll jump out and see what it is." This I did, and encountered a man with a dark, swarthy face, seared by old passions, who remarked leisurely, though gruffly :

" It's all up against yer, gov'nor—the can's broke."

The " can " was an iron chest of drawers on wheels, used for baking potatoes in the streets. Upon inspection, I found that a leaf of one of the small springs upon which the " tater-can " rested was broken. At the out-

side, two or three shillings would have covered the cost of repairing, or even re-purchase, but on my asking the question, the vendor of potatoes promptly replied, "One quid is the damidge, an' don't you forget it."

I said I wouldn't, nor would he get the sovereign. At that moment, much to my surprise, another fellow came forward and claimed damages, at the same time seizing the horse's bridle, and blurting out :

"Yer don't git away from here without yer part, strike me dead if yer do !"

And now from a neighbouring public-house came a number of rough, slip-shod fellows, who surrounded the carriage, and there was quite a Babel for a few moments.

I was in despair. I endeavoured to bargain with my man, but the fellow, holding the horse's head, loudly swore that he'd see me to perdition before he would budge an inch. Chevalier came to the rescue. Lowering one of the windows an inch or two, he said :

"There can't be two owners. I'll pay the first-comer or neither."

All this time there was not a policeman to be seen. The two men now entered into an argument, the first-comer endeavouring to persuade the other to leave, then turning to me, said :

"Give us ten bob, an' we'll let yer go."

"No,—five."

"Ten, or—"

The one who held the horse, came forward to support the other's demand. I pushed two half-crowns into my man's hand, jumped into the carriage, and away we went as fast as the horse could take us to the Canterbury, where the comedian arrived just in the nick of time.

I should not like to say that the "tater-can" was "planted" there, but I have often wondered whether that spring had been broken before, and how many times it has suffered since.

IV.

AN INFANT PRODIGY.

"With reference to the reminiscences," suddenly remarked Chevalier, proceeding to divest himself of his stage dress, "I'm afraid there's not much early material to work on."

It was in a dressing-room of the London Pavilion. Bates, Chevalier's dresser, was busily engaged packing up his master's "props," and Chevalier was now applying himself to a bowl of water.

"And, perhaps, it's just as well," he continued. "As a prodigy, the sufferings I inflicted upon the public must have been awful. Fancy! twenty-five years ago I fully persuaded myself that I was a pocket Bellew and Leybourne in one. What I must have been like, I dread to think, but certain am I that I met with a tolerable amount of success at the various entertainments constantly being organised in the

neighbourhoods of Notting Hill, Shepherd's Bush, and Kensington. By the way, W. Lestocq, part author of 'Jane,' 'The Foundling,' and several other plays, was, I remember, a budding tenor at this time, and appeared at many of these entertainments."

I accompanied Chevalier home that evening, and he showed me a time-worn exercise book in which were pasted many of the poems and songs in his earliest repertoire. The same book contained some entries of his infant performances, one of them being :—

"The September Gale, by Oliver Wendell Holmes, delivered at Cornwall Hall, Notting Hill, 17th August, 1870."

He was about eight years old at the time, but informed me that his *début* in public was made quite a year previously.

So that the genesis of the future "coster's laureate," as Mr. Arthur Symons has so aptly named him, was commenced at the tender age of seven, when, as a rule, memory is scarcely developed enough to hand down its impressions to later years. But truly I think that, in Chevalier's case, it was different. From this time the effect made upon him was so strong that it never passed away ; nay more, it grew upon him, and his natural artistic instinct sheltered and preserved it.



ALBERT CHEVALIER AND HIS BROTHER, AUGUSTE.

Upon glancing through the same book, one comes across various little evidences of his analytical and observant characteristics, for, with the enthusiasm of his boyhood, he has entered herein memoranda of several performances witnessed in company with his father and others, among whom is mentioned the name of "Auguste," this being his brother, who has since won his spurs as the composer of many of Chevalier's songs, under the soubriquet of "Charles Ingle."

Headed, "Princess's, March 11th, 1874," we find a short account of his visit—"with papa"—to see the play of "Mary, Queen of Scots," in which Mr. and Mrs. Rousby took part. There are also accounts of a performance of "The Wandering Jew," with Mr. James Fernandez and the late Mr. Benjamin Webster in the cast.

Chatting over this with Chevalier, he said :

"My father at that time was French master at the Kensington Grammar School, and amongst his pupils were the sons of the late Henry Compton. I obtained an introduction to the popular comedian, who good-naturedly consented to give me a hearing. I remember calling at his house in Kensington Square, and being shown into his study. He was sitting in an old-fashioned, high-backed Windsor chair, and was smoking a long

clay pipe. Laying this aside, he looked me up and down in a kindly way, and said, 'So you want to be an actor, eh?' I told him that was my burning desire, and, subject to his encouragement, my ultimate determination. 'Recite something to me,' he said. It was an awful ordeal, I know, for me. If he suffered, and I am sure he must have done, he dissembled his emotion. First he patted me on the back, and exclaimed, 'Good! very good!' Then gently shaking me by the hand, and smacking his lips, as I had heard him do on the stage, prior to making a point, he said, 'Come and see me again—*when your voice breaks.*'"

Before leaving these early days of budding ambition, it is proper to record that Chevalier was born on March 21st, in the year 1862, at 21 in St. Ann's Villas, Royal Crescent, Notting Hill. A near neighbour was Mr. G. A. Henty, the popular author of many stirring stories of adventure, and now editor of *The Standard*. Chevalier tells me he remembers quite well Mr. Henty delivering, some years later, a lecture, with magic-lantern views, at his own house, on the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1, on which occasion our comedian *thinks* he obliged with a recitation.

Claiming origin from three races—the Gallic, the Welsh, and the Hibernian—the secret of Chevalier's

mimetic power, plaintive minstrelsy, and natural humour, is doubtless therein explained. Five other children were also born to his parents, two of whom died young, the three remaining being a sister, Adèle ; and two brothers, Bertram and Auguste ; the latter mentioned later on in his adopted name of "Charles Ingle."

His father having died some years since, Chevalier is left the head of his house. But I must hark back to his young days again [introducing readers to an unknown gentleman—"Mr. Knight "] and leave for awhile the more famous Albert Chevalier, or, to give him his full name—Albert Onésime Britannicus Gwathveoyd Louis Chevalier.

“*Mr. Knight.*”

“*Mr. Knight.*”

I.

1877—THE OLD PRINCE OF WALES'S THEATRE.

On a previous page, I have recounted some of Chevalier's early exploits as an amateur. It now appears, from a programme before me, that, on January 24th, 1876, he blossomed forth as a manager, and at the Ladbroke Hall, Notting Hill, produced, on that date, “The Quack Doctor,” “Handy Andy” (dramatised from Samuel Lover's novel), and “Ici on parle Français.” Chevalier portrayed *Handy Andy* and *Victor Dubois*.

In the casts of the two last pieces, his brother Auguste (“Charles Ingle”) is numbered.

“Yes,” said Ingle, upon my referring to it, “I was the *Squire O'Grady* in ‘Andy.’ I recollect it quite

well—probably from the fact that I didn't know a line of the part!"

Another programme of an amateur performance is headed—

"ROSCIUS" DRAMATIC CLUB.

LADBROKE HALL,

NOTTING HILL,

MARCH 22ND, 1877.

and I find that three pieces were performed on the date mentioned, "Taming a Tiger," "No. 1, Round the Corner," and "Richelieu: or the Conspiracy." It is worthy of record here as, heading the cast of Bulwer Lytton's play, I find—

"Louis the Thirteenth - - Mr. ALBERT CHEVALIER."

I laughingly handed the programme to Chevalier.

"I told you so," he said. "Oh! I must have been a terror. Fancy having the impudence to assume a kingly role at fifteen!"

"At least, you didn't act without precedent," I replied.

"There might be precedents for the part—boy-kings I mean—but precious little, I fear, for my interpretation of it."

On Saturday, September 29th, 1877, at the Prince of



THE END OF THE WORLD



"MR. KNIGHT."—[CHEVALIER AT 16.]

Wales's Royal Theatre, Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft produced Tom Taylor's comedy, "An Unequal Match," in which appeared the Bancrofts, Henry Kemble, Arthur Cecil, and Misses Ida Hertz and Kate Phillips. As an after-piece, the old farce, "To Parents and Guardians," was presented, and cast as follows :

Doctor Swish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. TEESDALE.
Monsieur Tourbillon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. ARTHUR CECIL.
Master Robert Nettles	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. W. YOUNGE.
Master William Waddilove	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. KEMBLE.
Master Skuttler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. DEANE.
Master Skraggs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. KNIGHT.
Nubbles	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. NEWTON.
Dogget	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. HATTON.
Mary Swish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Miss A. WILTON.
Virginie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Miss IDA HERTZ.

The company engaged here for the season also included Mr. Kendal, Mr. John Clayton, Mrs. Kendal, Miss Le Thiere, and Miss Marie Litton.

"I made my first appearance on *the* stage in good company, didn't I?" said Chevalier, glancing over the programme I was examining. "I appeared under the *nom de théâtre* of 'Knight;' Englished my name, you see. 'Twas a very tiny part, but being originally en-

gaged as a 'super,' I was somewhat pleased with it, and reckoned myself an actor there and then. I don't remember much about it, except that Kemble was very funny as the fat boy, and Cecil excellent as *Tourbillon*."

II.

A FEW RECOLLECTIONS.

"By the way," he continued, "I recollect very well writing out the farce from memory, with all the stage business, etc., introduced. The boy who played *Nettles* (certainly one of the best boy-actors I have seen) was Willie Younge, who has since won a reputation in journalism, and as a writer of lyrics."

"Any recollection of Mr. Bancroft?"

"Yes, one in particular. Whilst I was here I had the misfortune to sprain my ankle, and he very kindly told me to rest until I was quite well again, adding that during my absence from business, I should not suffer pecuniarily; and I think it was very nice of him."

I turned to my notes and said:

"Now we come to the 'Diplomacy' tour."

"Yes—wait a bit, though. I should like you to

chronicle this show," handing a programme to me, which read :

KING'S CROSS THEATRE,
LIVERPOOL STREET, KING'S CROSS.

PROPRIETOR - - MR. HARRY CROUCH.

MAY 27TH, 1878.

Hereon was announced a drama, "The Omadhaun Witness," and the farce, "Checkmate," in this last-named "Mr. Albert Knight" being cast for *Sam Winkle*.

"It seems ages ago," he said with a smile. "Harry Crouch, an old Strand Theatre comedian, was the lessee, and in the company was my old friend Cecil Thornbury, now playing with W. S. Penley, in 'Charley's Aunt,' at the Globe; and Dalton Somers."

Mr. and Mrs. Kendal having booked a tour for "Diplomacy," which had been produced at the Prince of Wales's, by the Bancrofts, on January 12th, 1878, with tremendous success, Chevalier was engaged for the small part of *Antoine*.

"Say that I owed this engagement to Arthur Cecil, who introduced me to Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, and gave me many kindly and valuable hints," said Chevalier,

upon my asking him if he had anything to say before I closed this section of the book.

"And," he continued, "I should like you to mention that as a youngster I was greatly impressed by the silence observed behind the scenes during the performances at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. To prevent the least noise, the stage was covered with felt, and the scene shifters wore slippers ; and also gloves to avoid soiling the scenery. The utmost attention was given to the smallest details, and the smart, business-like way in which everything was done inspired me with great respect for my managers.

"The excellent fantastic dancer, Fred Storey, was one of the boys in 'To Parents and Guardians,' and I can well remember his antics in the dressing-room, going through the performance known as the 'splits,' and making energetic attempts to tie himself in knots, much to the wonder and amusement of us all.

"Before I went away with the Kendals, a gentleman engaged me to play *Conn* in 'The Shaughraun,' and *Claude Melnotte* in 'The Lady of Lyons,' which was to be the Saturday night's bill. It may sound a bit absurd, but at the time I was very flattered, I can tell you, and actually turned up for rehearsal at a hall—the name of which I have forgotten—but on arriving found

that the place had been refused him because he couldn't pay the required deposit for use of gas, and all I had to show for my engagement was a play-bill, on which my name was 'starred' in huge letters!"

Many and Various.

Many and Various.

[1878-87.]

I.

THE "DIPLOMACY" TOUR.

The youth now dropped his assumed name of "Knight," and was billed in his own cognomen—Chevalier. His part in "Diplomacy" was, as I have said, a very small one, but it seems to have called forth a deal of praise from the provincial press, and this, with such proven artists as Mr. Kendal, Mr. Teesdale, Mr. Elwood, Mr. Draycott, Mr. Mackintosh, Mrs. Kendal, Miss Talbot, Miss Crawford, and Miss Kate Pattison in the cast, should count for much, when we consider that Chevalier was an inexperienced lad.

Two of the principal Press opinions of his performance are here appended.

"For a small part, Mr. Chevalier's *Antoine* should also be praised."

Edinburgh Daily Review, September 24th, 1878.

"The Parisian quaintness of *Antoine*, the *major domo* of the Parisian *ménage* is exactly hit off by Mr. Chevalier."

Liverpool Daily Post, October 22nd, 1878.

In this piece, *Baron Stein* was played by William Mackintosh, a man of whom Chevalier has the highest opinion, both as an actor and as a friend.

"Mackintosh," he has exclaimed, enthusiastically, to me, "is one of the finest actors I have ever seen—a perfect artist alike in comedy, burlesque, or the serious drama; and," he would add, feelingly, "a jolly good fellow to the backbone."

And so he is. As an actor, I admire him; as a man, I respect him; and Chevalier could have paid his friend no more touching tribute than in dedicating to him his song, "My Old Dutch" ("an' wot a *pal*!").

Here is the programme as performed by the company at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle :

FOR SIX NIGHTS ONLY.

MR. AND MRS KENDAL

(MISS MADGE ROBERTSON)

And COMPANY (by arrangement with Mr. and Mrs. BANCROFT),
in the new play called

DIPLOMACY.

Adapted for the English Stage, from M. VICTORIEN SARDOU'S
Comedy, "Dora," by Mr. SAVILLE ROWE, and Mr. BOLTON
ROWE.

MONDAY, AUGUST 26TH, AND FIVE FOLLOWING EVENINGS,

At 7.30, will be presented

DIPLOMACY

Captain Beauclerc	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. KENDAL.
Henry Beauclerc	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. TEESDALE.
Count Orloff	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. ELWOOD.
Baron Stein	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. MACKINTOSH.
Algie Fairfax	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. DRAYCOTT.
Markham	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. HATTON.
Antoine	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. CHEVALIER.
Marquise de Roi-Zares	-	-	-	-	-	-	Miss A. CRAWFORD.
Comtesse Zicka	-	-	-	-	-	-	Miss K. PATTISON.
Lady Henry Fairfax	-	-	-	-	-	-	Miss M. TALBOT.
Mion	-	-	-	-	-	-	Miss G. TEMPEST.
Dora	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. KENDAL (Miss MADGE ROBERTSON).

II.

WITH MR. JOHN HARE AT THE COURT THEATRE.

Chevalier remained with the Kendals until the end of the tour. Mr. Hare being about to re-open the Court Theatre, after a long recess, with a revival of Palgrave Simpson's "A Scrap of Paper," (adapted from "Les pattes des Mouche,") Chevalier was cast for *Jones*, a subordinate part. The comedy was produced on Saturday, January 6th, 1879, and in the cast were the Kendals, T. N. Wenman (since deceased), Mackintosh, (who, in this piece, made his first appearance on the London stage; and, according to the press, offered "a really admirable bit of character acting as the old entomologist, *Dr. Penguin*,") W. Younge, R. Cathcart, Mrs. Gaston Murray, Miss C. Grahame, who also made her first London appearance, and Miss Kate Pattison.

It appears to have been a superb production and met with unquestioned success.

Matinées were at this time rapidly becoming custom-

ary, and in accordance therewith, on Saturday, Feb. 15th, 1879, Mr. Hare produced "The Ladies' Battle," in which he was inimitable as *Montrichard*; and Mrs. Kendal gave a splendid performance of the *Countess*. Curiously enough, Chevalier's part was named *Antoine*, as in "Diplomacy," and in reviewing the play, the *London Express* of February 22nd, 1879, wrote :

"Mr. Chevalier's make-up deserves the very highest praise."

In May, 1879, the stage paid its tribute to the fund raised for the relatives of the men slain in the lamentable catastrophe at Isandula, where, it will be remembered, the 24th Regiment was suddenly surrounded by thousands of Zulu warriors, and butchered almost to a man. A benefit performance took place at the Gaiety Theatre, when the Bancrofts appeared in "Ours," and Chevalier supported the Kendals as the old guardian, *Barker*, in "Uncle's Will."

"I have very strong reason to recollect that afternoon," said Chevalier, as I obtained these particulars from him. "The Kendals, of course, were quite at home in their old characters. I was playing for the first time the old man's part, and Mr. Kendal had rearranged the piece so that it opened with a long speech, wherein the story was told up to a certain point by me. Of course, I was quite a youngster (about 18 years old),

and very nervous when I went on. There were only the three of us in the cast, and after Mr. Kendal had entered, my mind kept wandering to the 'cue' I should have presently to give for Mrs. Kendal's entrance. Well,—do you know, it completely escaped my memory—I could *not* remember it, and to add to my confusion, I happened to glance towards the prompt entrance and caught sight of Irving, Bancroft, David James, Miss Ellen Terry, and a lot of other celebrities watching the progress of the piece from the wings. The shock to my nerves was such, that I absolutely 'dried up,' and couldn't utter a word. At that moment a tremendous round of applause from the audience startled me, re-assured me, and after it subsided I got along capitally, and went off. My mind was a bit uneasy as to the Kendals' opinion of my performance, so I did not wait to see them, but went home. At night, I met Mrs. Kendal, who spoke very well of my effort. Mr. Kendal, coming up at the moment, said :

“‘You were a bit uncertain of your lines, though ; in fact, upon one occasion you stopped dead.’

“‘Yes,’ said I, ‘didn’t you hear the round of applause I got ?’

“He laughed. ‘Oh, you mean *when the Prince of Wales entered the theatre !*’”

III.

ON TOUR AGAIN, WITH MESSRS. HARE AND KENDAL.

There is not much to record here. In September, 1879, for the second time Chevalier accompanied the Kendals, who joined forces with Mr. Hare. In the company were T. N. Wenman, W. Mackintosh, William Terriss, Draycott, Brandon (now known as Brandon Thomas), J. H. Barnes, Mrs. Gaston Murray, Miss Wade, Miss Cathcart, and Miss Grahame. The pieces performed were "Old Cronies," the late Lord Tennyson's one-act play, "The Falcon;" "Still Waters Run Deep;" "A Quiet Rubber;" "Uncle's Will;" "The Ladies' Battle;" "A Scrap of Paper;" and Val Prinsep's playlet, "Monsieur le Duc," the latter being first produced in Manchester about the beginning of September, 1879.

In the five last-mentioned pieces Chevalier played small roles, and "acquitted himself commendably."

I produce a week's programme of performances at Liverpool.

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE,

CLAYTON SQUARE, LIVERPOOL.

SOLE LESSEE AND MANAGER, MR. FRANK EMERY.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th,

MR. & MRS. KENDAL, MR. JOHN HARE,

And FULL COMPANY from the St. James's Theatre, London.

Stage Manager	} St. James's Theatre {	For the Company {	Mr R. CATHCART Mr. JOHN HUY
Acting Manager and			
Treasurer			

MONDAY and TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th and 21st,

The Performance will commence at 7.30, with the Comedy in Three

Acts, written by J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON, entitled—A

SCRAP OF PAPER

Sir John Ingram	- - - - -	Mr. T. N. WENMAN
Col. Blake	- - - - -	Mr. W. H. KENDAL
Dr. Penguin, F.Z.S., etc.	- . - - -	Mr. MACKINTOSH
Archie Hamilton, his Ward	- - - - -	Mr. DRAYCOTT
Thomas	- - - - -	Mr. R. CATHCART
Jones	- - - - -	Mr. CHEVALIER
Lady Ingram	- - - - -	Miss FLORENCE WADE
Susan Hartley	- Miss MADGE ROBERTSON (Mrs. W. H. Kendal)	
Lucy Franklyn	- - - - -	Miss M. CATHCART
Mrs. Penguin	- - - - -	Mrs. GASTON MURRAY
Mrs. Perkins	- - - - -	Miss DALBY

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th

The Celebrated Comedy, in Three Acts—THE

LADIES' BATTLE

The Baron de Montrichard	- - - - -	Mr. HARE
Henri de Flavigneul	- - - - -	Mr. DRAYCOTT
Gustave de Grignon	- - - - -	Mr. KENDAL
Antoine	- - - - -	Mr. CHEVALIER
Brigadier	- - - - -	Mr. DE VERNEY
Leontine de la Villegontier	- -	Miss MAUD CATHCART
The Countess d'Autreval	Miss MADGE ROBERTSON (Mrs. Kendal)	

And for the First time in Liverpool, ALFRED TENNYSON'S

FALCON

An Original Play, in One Act; founded on a story in the "Decameron of Boccaccio."

The Count Federigo delgi Alberighi	- -	Mr. W. H. KENDAL
Filippo	- - - - -	Mr. DENNY
The Lady Giovanna	- - - - -	Mrs. KENDAL
Elisabetta	- - - - -	Mrs. GASTON MURRAY

Concluding with

OLD CRONIES

Dr. Jecks	- - - - -	Mr. MACKINTOSH
Captain Pigeon	- - - - -	Mr. T. N. WENMAN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th,

BULWER LYTTON'S Poetical Play, of THE

LADY OF LYONS

Claude Melnotte	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. W. H. KENDAL
Colonel Damas	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. HARE
Beauseant	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. J. H. BARNES
Mons. Deschappelles	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. R. CATHCART
Gaspard	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. DRAYCOTT
Captain Dupont	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. BRANDON
Glavis	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. MACKINTOSH
Landlord	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. DENNY
Captain Gervais	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. DE VERNEY
Notary	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. CHEVALIER
Pauline	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. KENDAL
Madame Deschappelles	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. GASTON MURRAY
Widow Melnotte-	-	-	-	-	-	Miss DALBY

In the latter part of 1879, Chevalier, at the conclusion of this tour was re-engaged by Messrs. Hare and Kendal for the St. James's Theatre, which opened under their management with "M. le Duc" and "The Queen's Shilling." He also appeared in "Still Waters Run Deep," "A Regular Fix," and "William and

Susan" (a version of Douglas Jerrold's play revised by W. G. Wills.) In these plays he had very small parts, but understudied several of the principal characters.

Chevalier tells an incident of a rehearsal of "M. le Duc," as follows :

"John Hare read the piece to us on the stage of the Court Theatre. My part was not very important, but, as Hare read it, I conceived in my own mind a man of at least eighty, a senile, shrivelled-up, snuff-taking old beau. A rehearsal was called the next day, and I commenced operations by doddering about the stage, and otherwise endeavouring to prove that I was not going to lose the chance of showing my manager I could score even as an octogenarian. I did not receive much encouragement, but nothing serious happened on this occasion. By the time we rehearsed again, I must have aged considerably in my desire to be accurate. Imagine my disappointment when Hare, unable any longer to control his feelings, jumped out of his stall, and asked me how I was going to make up? 'As a man of eighty,' I replied. 'Eighty!' he screamed; 'he's supposed to be a boy of *eighteen*! Go off, sir! *and come on young!*'"

IV.

VAN BIENE'S OPERA COMPANY, [1881].

Mons. Auguste Van Biene, the well-known 'cello player (at present touring with "The Broken Melody," a play written specially for him, and in which he sustains the leading part), in February, 1881, took into the provinces an opera company, comprising the following ladies and gentlemen :— Mmes. Blanche Cole, Annette Albu, Arabella Smythe, Phillipine Siedle, Joyce Maas, Ella Collins, Marie Jay, Bauermeister, Messrs. F. C. Packard, Dudley Thomas, Michael Dwyer, Henry Pope, Herve D'Egville, and Albert Chevalier. Julian Edwards (a clever composer, whose name transpires again in the course of these records) was chorus master and assistant conductor, and H. A. Freeman (now at the Grand Theatre, Islington, London), acting manager.

In "La Somnambula," Chevalier was the *Alessio*; and in "The Grand Duchess," he was cast for *Prince Paul*.

"Mention of 'Somnambula,' " said Chevalier, "reminds me of a story which reached me shortly after I left the St. James's Theatre, to join Van Biene's Opera Co. A new piece was produced by Messrs. Hare and Kendal. During the rehearsals one of the actors grumbled at the part he was cast for. This happened to reach Mrs. Kendal's ears, and she remonstrated with the malcontent. In the course of conversation, my name cropped up. 'Ah,' said she, 'we can't play pieces to suit every member of our company. We can't put up 'Hamlet' to please Mr. ———. We can't produce 'Somnambula' to oblige Mr. Chevalier!'"

While yet with the Opera Company, one or two incidents occurred, which Chevalier thus relates :

"We had been doing awful business, so Van Biene suggested that some of us should try and swell the coffers by giving a concert in a small town, about six miles off. The concert was advertised, and, in due time took place at the Albert Hall, which, if I remember rightly, was in the middle of a kind of fair ground, over a carpenter's shop. Julian Edwards was the pianist ; Annette Albu, soprano ; Joyce Maas, contralto ; H. D'Egville, baritone ; and I, for the nonce, was turned on to sing comic songs. At half-past seven the doors opened. I was on the stage, anxiously listening for

the rush of paying people. There was no 'rush'—at least, none of that kind. About five minutes to eight, I heard a pair of clogs advancing steadily over the benches. Suddenly the noise ceased. I peeped through the curtain, and saw a very-much-begrimed mill-hand, sitting in solitary state, waiting for the performance to begin. By eight o'clock the audience numbered, in all, about twenty roughs. They hissed nothing—they applauded nothing. They were solemnly apathetic till *I* came on to sing a stuttering song, called 'Sammy Stammers.' I had hardly finished when I heard the before-mentioned clogs moving—*this time* towards the door. An argument with our manager ensued, and through the now rapidly-emptying hall, a harsh voice was heard to exclaim, 'Fancy payin' to 'ear a chap as *can't sing wi'out stutterin'!*'

"The next night, in the same hall, we played 'Don Giovanni.' Outside the principal, nay, the *only* entrance was a brass band in a gilt chariot. As an appropriate bait to tempt the lovers of Mozart, this itinerant orchestra indulged in an impromptu arrangement of that popular comic song, 'Tommy, make room for your Uncle.' A crowd collected round the cart. Presently a few of the onlookers yielded to the temptation, and came in to hear the opera. It so happened,

that the artist engaged to play *Masetto* was unable to appear, and with only a few hours for study, I had to take his place. I entreated the management to spare me and the public, but my prayers were unavailing. Van Biene was good enough to acknowledge that he didn't expect me to be letter or note perfect, and gave me *carte blanche* to get through as best I could. George Fox was kind enough to sing most of the music at the wings, during which I opened my mouth on the stage, and for the first and only time in my life passed for a real vocalist. In the second act, I played a scene (spoken) with the *Don* (Michael Dwyer). I was in a hopeless muddle about my words. No one in the company had a copy of the English libretto. One or two noble-hearted choristers confided certain grey-haired gags—I hardly knew the subject of the scene. As the time drew near for my entrance I was standing in the property room. My eye dropped on a bundle of stuffed sticks, sausages, bladders, etc., which had been used at pantomime time. In desperation I seized the whole lot, rushed on to the stage, and gave an imitation of Chirgwin, the "white-eyed Kaffir." The scene went very well, but I didn't wait to receive the congratulations of either Dwyer or Van Biene, and stranger still, I didn't get my notice !"

V.

CECIL BERYL'S SEASON [1881].

Concluding with Van Biene, Chevalier joined Mr. Cecil Beryl for a short season at Glasgow, Greenock, and Coatbridge, and opened in the former town, at the Royal Princess's Theatre, playing *Major Stretton* in Frank Harvey's play, "False Glitter." In the company were Mackintosh, who scored heavily; Denis Coyne, Brandon Thomas, and Miss Chippendale.

The after-piece was a version of "La Joie fait Peur," called "Peebles." The translation was Chevalier's work, but he tells me that Mackintosh localised and practically re-wrote the comedy; likewise enacting the *nom rôle* in a splendid manner.

The company was then drafted to the Theatre Royal, Greenock, where both pieces met with success; from Greenock, to the Theatre Royal, Coatbridge, where the late Dion Boucicault's "Streets of London" was produced; Mackintosh playing *Badger*; Brandon

Thomas, *Mark Livingstone* ; and Chevalier, *Puffy* ; of which latter the local *Advertiser*, of August 13th, 1881, wrote :

"The *Puffy*, of Mr. Chevalier, is a splendid bit of low comedy acting ; while his great attention to detail, and an absence of straining after mere effect are commendable features, and not often found in pourtrayers of parts of a kindred nature."

The *Stage*, of August 5th, 1881, wrote :—

"We predict a first position for this young actor."

Harking back to the Glasgow Theatre, an amusing incident occurred which may be worthy of mention.

William Mackintosh was accorded a benefit there, and the management produced three pieces, "Behind the Scenes," "The Spitalfields Weaver," and "The Peep-Show Man." The incident under notice, happened during the progress of the last-named piece, and is thus recorded by Chevalier :

"Brandon Thomas always was, and is still, an enthusiast. He was cast for one of two smugglers with whom the virtuous Peep-show man had a long and desperate struggle in the second act. Mackintosh, who was playing the title rôle, had to appear on the rocks at the back of the stage and give vent to a long soliloquy. The smugglers, possibly unused to similar surprises, were to attack him there and then. Mackintosh's only

weapon of defence was a big oak stick. Now Thomas arranged at rehearsal to have a board down his back, under his coat, so that the audience might hear and appreciate the drubbing he was to receive at the hands of the Peep-show man. At night, unfortunately for Thomas, in his excitement, he *forgot the board*. The struggle was to have lasted at least five minutes. Down went Thomas at the first blow, and nothing would induce him to move, until the despairing stage manager dropped the curtain *on* him. He gave one wild yell, and the act-drop was raised a few inches to enable him to die *inside*. The next night, when he undressed, he might have passed for a sandwich-board man !”

Continuing his recollections of this period, Chevalier says :

“I was returning to London, after a not too successful engagement in the North of England. A basket containing my wardrobe (not extensive) was in the van. I took into the carriage with me my violin, banjo, one-stringed fiddle, and a brown paper parcel, containing the overflow from the aforementioned basket. A serious looking young man jumped in as the train was starting, regardless of the warnings shouted at him by porters, guards, etc. He had evidently been running and was out of breath with the exertion. By

degrees he recovered himself. It took him some time. I should say about 50 miles ! Presently he became conscious of my presence. He carefully ran his eye, first over me, and then my 'props' on the rack. I could see him mentally striving to find the connecting link. Suddenly, with a smile, as if anxious to open the conversation, he said, 'You're a professional, I presume ?' I said I was—might I be equally curious and ask him how he had guessed it ? 'Oh, easily enough,' he replied. 'Your careworn expression—and *your luggage !*'"

VI.

"THE SQUIRE" TOUR. [1882].

During the interval between Beryl's season, and "The Squire" tour, Chevalier gave one or two entertainments at the Athenæum, Shepherd's Bush, and amongst the items submitted was an operetta called "Begging the Question," written by himself, and with music by Julian Edwards. It was acted by the author and composer, assisted by Miss Annie Kinnaird, and proved very successful.

The West London Advertiser, under date, March 25th, 1882, in noticing the piece, said:—

"The music teems with exquisitely bright and sparkling melody a bright, merry, and most laughable little piece it would grace and usefully occupy the stage of any theatre in the Kingdom."

In April, 1882, Mr. Edgar Bruce's company, which included Arthur Elwood, Geo. B. Phillips, Chas. Garthorne, Chas. Fawcett, Brigata Bucallossi (son of

the well-known composer), and Chevalier ; and Misses H. Lindley, M. Talbot, and Maria Siddons, and later Rose Leclercq, opened at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, in Arthur W. Pinero's play, "The Squire."

Chevalier's performance of *Gunnion*, the old farm labourer, at once stamped him as a character-actor of extraordinary ability, and throughout the provincial tour of nine months, he was the recipient of numerous testimonies from the Press in eulogy of his subtle and artistic rendering. Make-up, gait, voice, dialect, all came in for the abundant praise offered him ; and from this performance he dates much of his after-success in London.

I reproduce here a few of the Press opinions :

" It is worth a visit to the theatre this week, if only to enjoy Mr. A. Chevalier's acting as old *Gunnion*."

Brighton Times, April 14th, 1882.

" Mr. A. Chevalier, whose *Gunnion*, an agricultural septuagenarian, was one of the finest pieces of character acting we have ever seen. It was perfect."

Northampton Weekly Guardian, April 22nd, 1882.

" Is uncommonly clever, and the very essence of good comedy. The character of the old farm labourer is portrayed with a minuteness of detail, and a broad, powerful grasp that should attract special notice. Mr. Chevalier is thoroughly successful in showing what comedy really is, and when it should stop short of the buffoonery, which so often is mistaken for art."

Leicester Daily Post, May 9th, 1882.

" *Gunion* stood out as one of the most astonishing and truthful bucolic sketches we remember to have seen."

Derby Daily Telegraph, June 20th, 1882.

" An exceedingly clever impersonation, almost beyond the reach of criticism."

Croydon Guardian, July 22nd, 1882.

" It is simply a creation, and we cannot possibly speak in terms of too high commendation of Mr. Chevalier's make-up, acting, and general fitness for the part."

Bradford Daily Telegraph, November 7th, 1882.

VII.

TOOLE'S THEATRE—[1883.]

"The Squire" tour finished in December, 1882, and after a recess of six months, Chevalier obtained an engagement under Messrs. T. W. Robertson and H. Bruce's management at Toole's Theatre. Their season commenced with the late Tom Robertson's comedy, "M.P."; and besides our comedian, who was cast for *Mulhewther*, the company included Messrs. J. F. Younge, the late E. D. Ward, Allen Beaumont, J. F. Macklin, Fred Irving, A. D. Adams, and Misses Cora Stuart and Florence Gerard. "M.P." was preceded by "Our Bitterest Foe." Later on, in the place of the latter, a posthumous farce by T. W. Robertson, called, "A Row in the House," was produced, in which Chevalier played *Scorpion*.

In October, 1883, "Ours" succeeded "M.P.," and

Chevalier made a hit as *Sergeant Jones*. To the above-named artistes, Miss Fanny Addison and Miss Amy Roselle were added.

During the run of this play, Chevalier was the hero of a ludicrous scene, which he shall describe for himself.

"A week prior to the termination of this season, J. F. Younge left Toole's to fulfil an engagement at, I think, the Olympic. I had been his understudy for the part of *Colonel Shendryn* in "Ours," and was, therefore, called upon to play the part. Between the first and second acts I was to change my costume and appear in regimentals—off to the Crimea. I am not usually careless in these matters, but as there was apparently little difference in our heights, I had not troubled to try on Younge's uniform. At night, when I put on the tunic, I discovered, too late, that I had been very much mistaken. I could not fill it, even by wearing my ordinary jacket and vest underneath. Suddenly, the dresser who had watched my struggles with a hopeless air, became inspired. Handing me a bundle of towels, he, said, 'Stuff them in your chest while I put on your spurs.' I did as he suggested. I made my entrance, and contrived to get through pretty well in the scene where the *Colonel* bids farewell to the wife with

whom, for some years, he has not been on the best of terms (*en passant*: perhaps, the audience thought the remarkable chest accounted for this domestic misunderstanding). I then prepared to work up an effective exit. To this day I remember the lines I had to speak, 'I may find peace in the campaign—I cannot find it here. I can control a regiment, but not a wife! Better battle than a discontented woman.' In my excitement I stamped my foot. Down came the towels. I turned round, holding them up—and went off to the Crimea, dragging in my wake two large fur mats. The inspired dresser *had put my spurs on upside down.*"

"It was here," continued Chevalier, "that Herbert Waring made his *début*, before a London audience, playing in the comedietta, 'Our Bitterest Foe.' In the same piece, J. H. Darnley (who has since produced several very successful plays, 'The Solicitor,' 'The Balloon,' etc.,) made his first appearance in the metropolis. Here also I first met the late J. F. Younge, who was extremely kind to me. I remember one day after rehearsal, the subject of mimicry cropping up, and Florence Gerard giving some of the very finest imitations of popular actresses I have ever seen."

VIII.

AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

Conducted by Mr. F. H. Macklin, a series of dramatic representations was given in October and November, 1883, in the Crystal Palace Theatre. One of the productions (October 30th), was an adaptation by Wybert Reeve, of Mrs. J. H. Riddell's novel "George Geith of Fen Court," entitled : "George Geith, or the Romance of a City Life." The company consisted of Messrs. F. H. Macklin, Albert Chevalier, Myers, H. Darnley, Harry Proctor (since dead), E. W. Gardiner, W. H. Gilbert ; Mesdames F. H. Macklin, Kate Neville, Rosier, and Harriet Coveney (since dead).

" I have a very vivid recollection of a performance of, I think, 'The Lancashire Lass,' at the Crystal Palace, under the management of F. H. Macklin. The part I played had one very good scene. At rehearsal, the stage manager, an old actor, with whom I had to play this particular scene, asked me if I wanted to 'run

through it.' I was young and foolish enough to reply, with an affectation of long experience, that 'I was all right if he felt equally sure of himself'; and so the scene was passed over. At the performance, I was letter perfect. I gave him his cue, whereupon he proceeded to reel off all my speeches in a long oration, and exit with the one line on which I had relied for a big round of applause. *He* got the round. I never 'skipped' anything at rehearsal after that!"

IX.

THE GLOBE THEATRE—[1883].

*Under the management of Messrs. John Hollingshead and
J. L. Shine.*

Chevalier continued :

"The company engaged for the production of 'Low Water,' by A. W. Pinero, included Mesdames Compton, Abingdon ; Messrs. R. C. Carton, Chas. Cartwright, the late J. F. Younge, Smiley, E. W. Gardiner, the late T. Squire, W. Guise, and J. L. Shine. The comedy, though full of extremely clever writing, was not a first night success, and was withdrawn after a week's run. The part I played—*Sloman*, a broker's man—appeared only in the first act. I remember going round to the front to see the remainder of the performance. I stood in the upper boxes, just in front of the gallery. The first act had gone very well ; but no sooner did the curtain rise on the second, than for

some reason—which I have never been able to discover—two boys began to hiss and whistle. I am able to speak positively, because they were standing immediately behind me, and were the ringleaders of the uproar which followed. Seeing what I had hoped would prove a long engagement slipping away from me, I ventured to remonstrate with one of these larky ‘gods.’ ‘Can’t you wait till the curtain falls? Is it fair to interrupt the performers?’ The young gentleman addressed beamed on me, and replied, ‘Keep your ‘air on, guv’nor! You come in wi’ a horder! *We’ve paid.*’ As there was nothing more to say—I said it!”

X.

THE "IMPULSE" TOUR—[1884-5].

"Impulse," having ended its successful run at the St. James's Theatre, was, in February, 1884, taken into the provinces by Miss Fanny Josephs and Mr. C. W. Garthorne; Chevalier being entrusted with the character of *Sir Henry Auckland*. Other parts were allotted to Messrs. P. C. Beverley, J. H. Darnley; Mesdames Helen Cresswell, Maria Daly, and Fanny Enson.

"On this tour we visited—in addition to most of the principal provincial towns—a number of smaller ones, where the absence of a regular theatre necessitated the use of a fit-up, with scenery, etc. I appeared as the old blind baronet. One night, in the second act, during a little pathetic scene, I was somewhat annoyed at a sudden ripple of laughter. As I played the part with my eyes closed, I could only indulge in vague speculation as to what, on this particular occasion, had so

tickled the audience. The more earnest I tried to be, the more the people in front laughed. I remember the relief with which, on making my exit, I opened my eyes, and saw two stage-hands, busily engaged in fixing a portion of the scene, which had been fastened at the bottom, but not at the top. No wonder the people laughed ! All through my pathetic speeches, I had been fanned by a canvas frame—portion of the mimic wall, on which was painted the counterfeit presentment of a massive carved oak chimney-piece !”

XI.

THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE—[1885-7].

The first successful play of Pinero's, with which Chevalier's name was associated in London, was "The Magistrate."

On Saturday, March 21st, 1885, the piece was produced at the Royal Court Theatre, under the management of Messrs. John Clayton and Arthur Cecil. The full company performing the piece was as follows:—Messrs. Arthur Cecil, Fred Cape, and John Clayton (both since dead), F. Kerr, Harry Eversfield, Chevalier, Delane, Gilbert Trent, Albert Sims, Lugg, Burnley, Fayre; Mrs. John Wood, Mesdames Marion Terry, Norreys, and La Coste.

Chevalier's part was that of *Achille Blond*—proprietor of the "Hôtel des Princes"—and his rendering was in every way satisfactory to public and press.

During the rehearsals of "The Magistrate," at the Court Theatre, Chevalier says Mrs. John Wood complained that in the hotel scene, there was no fire-place.

Finero quietly reminded her that there were four walls to a room, adding, "If you wish it, Mrs. Wood, we'll have a fender and fire-irons placed *behind* the foot lights!"

Whilst Chevalier was still enacting his part in "The Magistrate," a farcical comedy, called "The Lady-Killer," of which he was part author with Mackintosh, was produced by the latter, with his own company, at Theatre Royal, Plymouth, on July 13th, 1885, and was followed by a burlesque of "Called Back," entitled "Called Back Again." This latter was written by Chevalier, and Mr. Walter Slaughter supplied the music. Here is the cast :

Mary Galatea Pauline	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. MACKINTOSH
Macari	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. KENNETH M. BLACK
Ceneri	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. CECIL THORNBURY
Petroff	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. J. MORTON EMMETT
Osip	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. H. BUCHANAN
Gilbert Vaughan	-	-	-	-	-	Miss MARIE WILLIAMS
Anthony March	-	-	-	-	-	Miss MINNIE ROTCHLEY
Kenyon	-	-	-	-	-	Miss FLORRIE YOUNG
Nellie	-	-	-	-	-	Miss LILLIAN HOBAN

Both pieces met with a fair share of success during the tour which followed, Mackintosh especially receiving great praise for his funny performance in the burlesque.

"The Magistrate," after being performed for 300



CHEVALIER AS "BERNSTEIN" [THE SCHOOLMISTRESS].

nights at the Court Theatre, was succeeded by another farce of A. W. Pinero's, entitled "The Schoolmistress," in which Chevalier's talent for character-acting was even more forcibly demonstrated than in the late piece. The character of *Otto Bernstein*, a German composer, was assigned to him, and taking the late Sir Julius Benedict as his model, he produced a quaint and clever portrait, which, with his natural acting in the part, greatly advanced his reputation.

Arthur Wing Pinero is, Chevalier says, the best reader of his own plays he ever heard. To listen to this gifted playwright as he interprets the various characters in his dramas is the greatest treat imaginable.

Chevalier was very fond of genial, bluff John Clayton, whose early demise removed a striking and important figure from English dramatic art. Mention of his name reminds me that in reply to a business communication, Chevalier received the following characteristic note written upon an odd piece of paper :—

" 14 Dec.

" God help you, Chevalier. (I can't find any paper.— You must be satisfied with this.)

" In the country, I merely join the country company without a change.

"As to London, God, he knows when the infernal architects, surveyors, lawyers, etc., will have finished their ghastly deeds.

"Yrs.,

"J. C."

[The foregoing letter refers to the New Court Theatre, then in course of erection, the completion of which poor John Clayton did not live to see.]

With Willie Edouin.

W. H. Miller, Editor.

With Willie Edouin.

I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

To his association with Willie Edouin, Chevalier probably owes much ; indeed, he has himself declared that his way to later popularity was opened and smoothed by the fortunate circumstance which led to an agreeable engagement under that gentleman's management. It was, therefore, his very sincere expression of goodwill when Chevalier told me that Edouin was one of the best and kindest of managers : a man whom to know was to admire and respect, as well for his estimable personal character as for his excellent gifts as actor and manager.

Referring to their first meeting, Chevalier says :

"Tom Taylor's play, 'Clancarty,' was running at the St. James's, and I had written a burlesque on it. This I read to Mackintosh, who thought very highly of

it. He seemed tickled at the way in which I had parodied the part of *King William III.*, which he was playing with such remarkable success. He wrote to Willie Edouin, and the result was an appointment, and an introduction to the popular comedian, under whose management I was destined to fulfil many very delightful engagements. We (Mackintosh and I) called at his house in St. John's Wood, about ten o'clock one November morning, and were shown into the dining-room. Edouin entered, very much *en deshabille*—need I say—smoking a cigar? (By the bye, what an extraordinary smoker he is! He lights a cigar, begins to talk—gets excited—shifts it about from one side of his mouth to the other; and you wonder where on earth it disappears to, seeing that, after the first two or three preliminary puffs, he lets it go out, and seldom troubles to re-light it!). He welcomed me very kindly, and, pointing to an easy chair, said, 'Sit right there—and read away. Don't mind my walking up and down. If I don't like the piece, I'll stop you!' He didn't stop me, and—more consoling still—he sat down! To cut a long story short—subject to certain alterations, he agreed to produce the burlesque; but, unfortunately, Mrs. Edouin was taken seriously ill. As she did not recover until the withdrawal of the original

play—the public was spared one of my inflictions. Shortly after this, I wrote another burlesque (to order) for Edouin, entitled, ‘Buffalo Bill Held by the Enemy.’ This shared the same fate as ‘Little Lady Clancarty,’ and from the same cause—Mrs. Edouin was again taken seriously ill. I was, evidently, no Mascot—so far as she was concerned. Consideration for her possibly accounts for the fact that I submitted no more burlesques to Edouin. A third might have proved fatal ! ”

II.

"A TRAGEDY."

Mr. Charles S. Fawcett's farcical piece, "A Tragedy," was produced by Edouin, at the Royalty Theatre, on April 28th, 1887. The cast included Eric Lewis, Edward Emery, Albert Chevalier, Walter Groves, Edward Thirlby, and Willie Edouin ; Marie Hudspeth, Emily Dowton, Dulcie Douglas, and Olga Brandon.

Chevalier tells me that Edouin was excruciatingly comic as *Burbage*, an actor of the old school ; and it is his opinion that the play deserved a better fate. He, himself, made a decided success as *Christopher Cute*, the polyglot detective, and in his protean disguises of character, asserted yet again his remarkable versatility.

III.

"KATTI, THE FAMILY HELP," AND "AIREY ANNIE."

The production of the first-named, at the Royal Princess's, Glasgow, on September 30th, 1887, by Edouin's company, provided Chevalier with a character in which he excelled all his previous efforts, and placed him in the front rank of comedy character actors. Indeed, he seems to have run Edouin pretty hard for first favour, and, throughout the short tour organised for the play, he won the following, amongst many similar tributes, from the provincial press, for his admirable performance :—

"Mr. Edouin, as *Finnikin Fluffy*, and Mr. Albert Chevalier, as his brother *Richard*, a retired provision merchant, act their parts with such skill as to keep the audience in a state of constant merriment, and the loud and involuntary shouts of laughter provoked by them were quite refreshing to hear."

Manchester Courier, December 6th, 1887.

"The best performance in the piece is Mr. Chevalier's *Richard Fluffy*, a retired provision merchant. Of course, everyone is heartily sick and tired of the habits and customs of the retired

shop-keeper, as exhibited in the three-act farce, but, as an eccentric comedian, Mr. Chevalier is possessed of so large a store of grotesque gesture, and burlesque attitude, and uses this pantomime so cleverly that one can easily pardon the character for the sake of its thoroughly laughable setting."

Manchester Guardian, December 6th, 1887.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier's make-up and acting in the part of *Richard Fluffy*, a retired provision merchant, who has married a ballet dancer, proved his qualification to rank high in the list of our low comedians."

Manchester Examiner, December 6th, 1887.

"Of Mr. Albert Chevalier's impression of *Mr. Fluffy* it is almost impossible to write too highly. The part is one which most actors would 'walk through,' but in Mr. Chevalier's hands it is lifted to the highest rank of character-acting."

Birmingham Owl, October 25th, 1887.

This adaptation (which, by the way, was also the work of Charles Fawcett), was produced by Edouin at the Strand Theatre, on Saturday, Feb. 25th, 1888. The casts of both this and the original production are here given.

GLASGOW.				LONDON.	
Mr. Finnikin Fluffy	-	-	Mr. Willie Edouin.	Mr Willie Edouin.	
Mr. Richard Fluffy	-	-	Mr. Albert Chevalier.	Mr. Albert Chevalier.	
Bob	-	-	Mr. Chas. S. Fawcett.	Mr. H. H. Morell.	
Dr. Easyman, M.D.	-	-	Mr. Coventry Davies	Mr. B. Webster.	
Mr. Joliffe	-	-	Mr. George Mallett.	Mr. W. Cheesman.	
Mrs. Finnikin Fluffy	-		Miss Kathleen O'Connor.	Miss Susie Vaughan.	
Mrs. Richard Fluffy	-		Miss Dorothy Clacey.	Miss Laura Sedgwick	
Alice Summers	-	-	Miss May Woolgar Mellon.	Miss Grace Huntley.	
Miss Perkins	-	-	Miss Annie Goward.	Miss Margaret Ayrton.	
Katti	-	-	Miss Alice Atherton.	Miss Alice Atherton.	

One or two notices of Chevalier's London performances are quoted here.

"A splendid companion picture is provided in the *Richard Fluffy*, of Mr. Chevalier. The make-up for this is a remarkable study, and the rendering throughout is as consistent as it is clever."

Era, March 3rd, 1888."

"It is a wonderful make-up, that of Mr. Chevalier, and the part is a triumph of fun and individuality without effort."

Sporting and Dramatic News, March 24th, 1888.

The performance of Mrs. Bernard-Beere and her companions, Henry Neville, Leonard Boyne, and Mons. Marius in "Ariane" at the Opera Comique, afforded the gifted editor of *Punch*, Mr. F. C. Burnand, and the versatile Strand Company, an opportunity for a powerful satire, which was accordingly presented on the night of April 4th, 1888, with complete success by Edouin. The burlesque is chiefly memorable for the wonderful performance of Margaret Ayrton, whose reproduction of Mrs. Bernard-Beere was generally admitted to have been one of the finest caricatures of which the modern stage could boast. Edouin's parody of Henry Neville was also voted excellent, as were the "Mons. Marius" of the delightful Miss Alice Atherton, and the "Leonard Boyne" of Chevalier.

IV.

CONCLUDING WITH EDOUIN.

Performances in Mark Melford's farcical comedy, "Blackberries,"—(in which Miss Alice Atherton sang a song written by Chevalier, called "The Lay of a Brahmapoutra") T. G. Warren's "His Wives;" and Miss Emily Coffin's "Run Wild;"—(which last piece Chevalier tells me had a splendid second act)—led up to the production of Mark Melford's farcical piece, "Kleptomania," and a revival of the late H. J. Byron's burlesque, "Aladdin; or the Wonderful Scamp!"

This last was written up to date by Chevalier, he himself playing *Abanazar*.

In this burlesque, Chevalier sang "Our 'Armonic Club," which enjoys the distinction of being the first of his series of Cockney songs performed in public.

I may here mention that as a first piece to "Run Wild," was produced a comedietta, by Chevalier, entitled "Cycling." The trifle, which was well-

received, was performed by Miss Alice Atherton, Mr. Herbert Sparling, and Mr. C. S. Fawcett.

During his sojourn at the Strand Theatre, Chevalier made the acquaintance of Edward Jones, the well-known composer, who was conducting here, and to whom we may have occasion to refer again in the course of these records.

At the Avenue Theatre.

At the Avenue Theatre.

I.

"THE PRIMA DONNA."

"My engagement at the Avenue like most of my strokes of good luck came about in a very casual way. I had, from time to time, been employed by Geo. Edwardes to scribble odd verses, scenes, etc., for the Gaiety. Among other things I wrote a couple of songs, which were accepted and sung by Miss Nellie Farren. E. J. Lonnen heard me sing 'Our 'Armonic Club,' at the Strand, and asked me to write something similar for him to introduce in 'Faust-up-to-date.' Never anticipating the eventual run on my Cockney songs, I submitted "'Ave a Glass,' which he sung with considerable success as *Mephistopheles*. I should like to say how fairly and generously Geo. Edwardes treated me in all my dealings with him. He always listened to anything I brought him. If he liked it he gave me

what I asked, and being somewhat hard up at the time, I daresay my demands were not always as modest as they might have been. I hope he will accept this late apology for several over-paid non-successes. One night I happened to meet Marius at the Gaiety. He asked me what I was doing—Could I accept an engagement? He told me the Avenue Theatre was about to re-open under his management, with the production of a comic opera, composed by Tito Mattei, and written by H. B. Farnie and Alfred Murray. He gave me the libretto to read and asked me to let him know if I could play the principal comedy part.

"I need hardly say I had considerable qualms. However, it was a case of nothing venture, nothing have. I ventured and the result was that after the first night of the 'Prima Donna' I was engaged, at a considerably increased salary, for two years as principal comedian at the Avenue Theatre."

Daily Telegraph, 18th October, 1889.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier, as *Ballard*, the manager, was throughout the evening irresistibly droll."

City Press, 20th November, 1889.

"The piece was received with genuine enthusiasm by a crowded auditorium. Undeniably, the honours of the piece devolve on Mr. Chevalier, who as the wonderful stage manager succeeds in keeping up the fun all the time he is visible. The one song that falls to his lot is genuinely humorous, while, what is more, it possesses the point

that is usually missing in the so-called comic songs one often hears nowadays at the theatres."

Evening News, 22nd October, 1889.

"The Avenue management was fortunate to secure the person of Mr. Albert Chevalier, a comedian worthy to follow in the footsteps of Mr. Arthur Roberts, for Mr. Chevalier is a good all-round comedian, equally at home in comic opera, farcical comedy, or burlesque. Unlike his predecessor, he is not a man of many inches, but then he has more wit in his little finger than many another man has in his whole body."

St. Stephen's Review, 30th November, 1889.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier, a comedian who, when with Mr. Edouin, and subsequently at Terry's Theatre, showed unmistakeable talent, here appears as *Ballard*, the manager of a troupe of strolling players, who are induced to impersonate the Ministers of an impecunious Grand Duke. Upon *Ballard*, of course, most of the comicality depends, and it is not too much to say that Mr. Chevalier worthily fills a part that would have severely tried the facetious powers of Mr. Arthur Roberts or Mr. Fred Leslie. Always original, always amusing, always quaint, and never vulgar, Mr. Chevalier brings a new kind of fun to bear, and I shall be much mistaken if he be not in a short time one of the most prominent comedians on the stage. The duet between him and Mr. George Capel, 'Tis love that makes the world go round' is one of the most diverting things in London.

"PERCY REEVE."

Daily Chronicle, 17th October, 1889.

"A capital song for *Ballard*, 'Behind the Scenes,' of a somewhat topical nature, and provided with several encore verses, to be sung when needful, as was the case last night, thanks to Mr. Albert Chevalier's clear enunciation of the words, and quaint acting. Mr. Albert Chevalier was very humorous throughout."

Pall Mall Gazette, 17th October, 1889.

"Mr. Chevalier's quaint *Ballard*—the manager of a theatrical

troupe—is so good that one wants more of it. Never obtrusive, and never out of the picture, it is a performance which, after a few days' settling down, will be quite a model one."

Theatre, November, 1889.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier is a host in himself; the stage was never dull so long as he occupied it, and he was compelled to sing three encore verses to his topical song, 'Behind the Scenes.' He is quite original and thoroughly humorous."

Sporting Life, 17th October, 1889.

"Mr. Chevalier, one of the truest and most quaintly original comedians, established himself firmly in the favour of the audience by his piquant humour and quietly effective vocalism. His song 'All the world's a stage' was demanded again and again."

Daily Chronicle, 6th December, 1889.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier embodies this character with a *verve* and heartiness that ensure for it the prominence rightly its due, and in the 'business' of the scenes in which he is engaged, exhibits an amount of quaint originality that is not likely to be lost sight of in the future."

Evening News and Post, 17th October, 1889.

"About the successor to Arthur Roberts? Well, Mr. Albert Chevalier has come, seen, and conquered. It was a trial for any comedian to follow a man so popular as Mr. Roberts, at a place like the Avenue, where the success of an opera was always considered to depend more on the individual efforts of 'Arthur' than on anything else. Mr. Chevalier comes out of the ordeal triumphantly, scoring his efforts in virtue of a quaint and dry vein of humour."

II.

"THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD."

The "Prima Donna" had a comparatively short run, and then the management tried the experiment of reviving an old burlesque by Robert Brough, entitled "The Field of the Cloth of Gold." In this, Chevalier played *Francis I*, introducing a burlesque French song, entitled "Tink-a-tin," written by himself, and composed by J. Crook; and "Funny, without being Vulgar," by Harry Brett and Charles Ingle. Both songs were very favourably received. Here are a few opinions of his performance:

Star, 27th December, 1889.

"First and foremost in the fun is Mr. Chevalier, whose French accent in the part of *King Francis I* entitles him on this occasion to be called Mons. Chevalier. How he sings a Parisian ditty, 'C'est chic,' and a topical ballad, 'It's Funny without being Vulgar', how he dances a can-can, how he fights *King Hal* (with the assistance of a friendly 'corner')—all these things must be seen and heard to be believed."

Observer, 20th December, 1889.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier was extremely funny as the French King, and has some clever songs, which he sings with much humour."

Sun, 29th December, 1889.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier most certainly scored a big success as the French monarch."

Morning Advertiser, 25th December, 1889.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier, who danced and sang very cleverly, could scarcely be surpassed in the rôle of *Francis*."

London, 28th December, 1889.

"One performance in particular, that of Mr. Albert Chevalier, would, in my opinion, have sufficed to redeem any piece from a charge of dullness. This clever actor's *Francis I* is a most genuine piece of humorous work, and it is a long time since I have heard two such capital songs as he has managed to supply himself with."

Pall Mall Gazette, 28th December, 1889.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier—always a quaint and original actor—makes an admirable *Francis I*. His comic methods, his songs, and his 'business,' throughout the piece could not be better."

Theatre, February, 1890.

"As to Mr. Albert Chevalier, as *Francis*, he was delightfully droll; his fun seemed to be such a natural outcome, so quaint, and so original, and his songs are droll and well sung. He most certainly contributed largely to the encores gained."

Evening News and Post, 27th December, 1889.

"The cast is exceptionally good. Mr. Albert Chevalier, 'a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy,' plays *Francis I* with that quaint and dry humour peculiarly his own, and most fitly described in the words of a capital song he sings, as 'Funny without being Vulgar.'"

Stage, 3rd January, 1890.

"To Mr. Albert Chevalier must be accorded the greatest praise for his most humorous and original conception of the character of *Francis*; his broken English, his quaint 'business,' and excellent singing of a French song, and of 'Funny, without being Vulgar, brought down the house.'"

The World, January, 1890.

"Mr. Albert Chevalier is an excellently quaint *Francis I*."

III.

MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER'S SEASON—"DR. BILL."

After this, Chevalier had the pleasure of serving under Geo. Alexander's banner during that gentleman's first season of theatrical management. It was Mr. Alexander's intention to open with "The Struggle for Life"; fortunately for him, as it afterwards proved, he had to substitute "Dr. Bill," an adaptation from the French by Hamilton Aide. This piece was a great success, and ran about a year. Here is the cast of the original production:

Dr. William Brown	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. FRED TERRY
Mr. Firman	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. ALBERT CHEVALIER
Mr. Horton	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. GEORGE CAPEL
George Webster	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. BENJAMIN WEBSTER
Baggs	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. HARRY GRATTAN
Mrs. Horton	-	-	-	-	-	Miss FANNY BROUGH
Louisa Brown	-	-	-	-	-	Miss ELIZABETH ROBINS
Jenny Firman	-	-	-	-	-	Miss LAURA GRAVES
Mrs. Firman	-	-	-	-	-	Miss CARLOTTA LECLERCQ
Ellen	-	-	-	-	-	Miss MARIE LINDEN
Miss Fauntleroy	-	-	-	-	-	Miss EDITH KENWARD

Opinions seem to have differed about Chevalier's performance in this piece. Here are a few specimens from a mass of Press-cuttings :

Whitehall Review, 8th February, 1890.

" Mr. Albert Chevalier renders with extreme dullness a part that ought to be particularly grotesque."

St. Stephen's Review, 15th February, 1890.

" Mr. Albert Chevalier's sketch of *Mr. Firman* is the best bit of acting the novelty affords. Mr. Chevalier has very little opportunity, of which he avails himself to the utmost."

Punch, 5th April, 1890.

" How capitally it is played ! Miss Brough, excellent ; and so also is Mr. Chevalier, who entirely loses his own identity in his make-up, and is not to be recognised at all, save for a few mannerisms."

The Era, 5th April, 1890.

" MR. ALBERT CHEVALIER AS MR. FIRMAN.—This is that dreadful father-in-law. The doctor applies to him an adjective slightly stronger, but also initialled with the letter 'D.' Mr. Chevalier's *Mr. Firman* is funny in appearance. There is a laughter concealed in that lock of hair that is so artfully arranged on his fussy forehead, behind which lurks a fussy brain. The air with which he brings in medical works for his son-in-law's study ; the importance he puts on as he hands out envelopes for direction to ladies of all the professions ; the consciousness of having done a clever thing which marks his acknowledgement of the letter forged for the doctor's advertisement, and the gulling of the British public, are all comical in the extreme ; but still more comical is the actor in the exhibition of old *Firman's* perplexity in the wildly extravagant business of the second act. Mr. Chevalier is certainly responsible for many of the aching sides that are the result of the hilarity created during the progress of the piece."



ALBERT CHEVALIER AS "SAM WELLER."

IV.

"SOCK AND BUSKIN."

By arrangement with Mr. Alexander, Chevalier seceded from the cast for several weeks in the summer, and Mr. John Beauchamp and he booked a short tour, under the management of Mr. Chas. Ingle. Chevalier relates the following experience of this ill-fated venture :

"Beauchamp and I arranged an entertainment called 'Sock and Buskin,' which consisted mainly of duologues from Dickens."

Here is a bill :

CORN EXCHANGE, NORTHAMPTON.

SPECIAL ATTRACTION FOR TWO NIGHTS.

BANK HOLIDAY AND TUESDAY, AUGUST 4th and 5th.

Prices of Admission—Front Seats (reserved) 3s. Second Seats, 2s.
Back Seats, 1s.

Tickets obtained of Messrs. Able and Son, Parade; Mr. Mark,
"The Drapery." Doors open at 7.30.

MR. JOHN BEAUCHAMP,

Of the St. James's, Drury Lane, Adelphi. Princess's, and Gaiety
Theatres, London ;

MR. ALBERT CHEVALIER,

Of the Avenue, St. James's, Strand, Toole's, and Court Theatres,
London, will appear in an entirely New

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENT

entitled :

‘ SOCK AND BUSKIN.’

consisting of

RECITATIONS, ORIGINAL HUMOROUS SONGS, BUR-
LESQUE LECTURES, ETC., and the following

SCENES FROM DICKENS

In character.

‘ PICKWICK.’

Tony Weller	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. JOHN BEAUCHAMP
Sam Weller	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. ALBERT CHEVALIER

‘ OLIVER TWIST.’

Bill Sikes	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. JOHN BEAUCHAMP
Fagin	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. ALBERT CHEVALIER

‘ MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.’

Betsy Prig	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. JOHN BEAUCHAMP
Sairey Gamp	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. ALBERT CHEVALIER

Business Manager (for Messrs. Beauchamp and Chevalier) Mr. CHAS.
INGLE.



MESSRS. JOHN BEAUCHAMP AND ALBERT CHEVALIER AS "BETSY PRIG"
AND "SAIREY GAMP."

"The remainder of the programme was filled in with songs, recitations, and burlesque lectures. My list of songs included 'Our 'Armonic Club,' 'Yuss, or, The Coster's Courtship,' and the 'Coster's Serenade.' I remember we engaged the Corn Exchange, Northampton, on August Bank Holiday. Only one person paid for admission! As it was holiday time we could not find anyone to fix up our footlights. The hallkeeper took compassion on us—told us not to worry, and promised it would be 'all right at night.' When we returned, half-an-hour before opening time, we found he had kept his word. In the absence of gas he had arranged a row of very tall candles where the footlight should have been. There was no mistaking how our light was produced, as the candles towered above the reflectors. We opened the doors and let in the solitary audience. We took him on one side, talked to him kindly, returned his shilling, and went home. I revisited the same hall on my first recital tour. The house was packed, money being turned away from all parts. The hallkeeper was very much surprised, as in the morning, recognising me, and remembering my last visit, he had made a bid of ten pounds for the night's receipts!"

V.

"THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE."

George Alexander's season at the Avenue closed with the above play, an adaptation from the French by Robert Buchanan and Fred Horner, in which Chevalier played *Chemineau*. The piece had a very short run, and after a brief engagement at Toole's, where he played in Frank Wyatt's three act farce, "The Two Recruits," Chevalier's theatrical career closed for the time being.



ALBERT CHEVALIER AS "SAIREY GAMP."

PART II.—MUSIC HALL SINGER.

“*The Coster’s Laureate.*”



"ST. CHEVY."

PART II.—MUSIC HALL SINGER.

“The Coster’s Laureate.”

I.—DOUBTS.

The first time Chevalier ever ventured to sing songs in private before any professionals was on the occasion of a little supper party, presided over by Mr. Edward Terry, who a few days after wrote as follows :

“Terry’s Theatre,

“October 8th, 1888.

“DEAR MR. CHEVALIER,

“Is it too much to ask you to let me have the words and music of the two songs you gave us the other night ? They were admirably written and sung.

“Sincerely yours,

“E. TERRY.”

"Our 'Armonic Club," and "Yuss, or the Coster's Courtship," are the songs alluded to. Chevalier treasures this letter, as coupled with Willie Edouin's permission to sing "Our 'Armonic Club," as *Abanazar*, in "Aladdin," at the Strand Theatre, it was one of the earliest encouragements he received to continue his series of Cockney lyrics.

"I have done a deal of writing in my time," said Chevalier, showing me a heap of manuscripts of lyrics, comediettas, and burlesques.

We were in the comedian's study at Isleworth—a small, but comfortable room at the top of the house facing the woodlands that stretch towards Twickenham. On the walls were numbers of framed character-sketches from the *Sporting and Dramatic News*, illustrating various plays in which Chevalier has taken part; and a collection of books and manuscripts filled several shelves on two sides of the room.

"It was my friend, Julian Edwards, who first encouraged me to write," he continued, after a pause. "He was a clever composer, yet somehow met with but indifferent success in this country. I am, however, pleased to say that he has since done meritorious work in the States, which has been well recognised. Some

of the best stuff I ever did was in the libretti of two operas written in collaboration with him, but I regret to say they were never performed."

In three or four portfolios I found scores of songs, mostly written in pencil upon odd sheets of paper—songs upon all conceivable subjects—humorous and sentimental, topical and fantastic. Among them were the originals of some of his earlier Cockney ballads, such as "Yuss !" "The Serenade," etc.

"Now," said I, "will you tell me the actual facts about your genesis as a music-hall artist. There are so many tales floating about that——"

He laughed and replied, "So there are, and most of them are wrong. You see, there were a number of forces at work ; the principal one, I suppose, being, that I was out of a shop. Upon one occasion a well-known music-hall manager after hearing me sing at the Bons Frères Club, offered me an engagement, but for some reason or other I refused. I could not make myself believe that my songs would be appreciated by an audience that liked broad effect.

"Another occasion found me introduced to Mr. Charles Morton (then manager of the Alhambra) by a friend of his, named Goldstein. Morton then and there asked me to come to the Alhambra ; and still I held out

for the reason already given. 'Do *you* think I should succeed?'—I asked. 'Succeed!' he exclaimed, 'of course;—*with a face like yours!*' Dear old Morton meant it, of course, as a compliment."

"Didn't Coborn——?"

"Yes; Charlie Coborn got me inside the Pavilion; wanted to introduce me to Villiers (the manager,) with a view to an engagement. Finding me obdurate, 'Well,' said he, 'if *you* won't do the business, I *shall!*'" To cut my story short, Ben Nathan finally persuaded me to make up my mind on the matter, and in his capacity as an agent, negotiated with the Pavilion Syndicate on my behalf. At first I would not sign the offered agreement for a year's engagement, thinking that the public would be sick of me in a few days. I therefore agreed to sing for a week on trial, and 'chance my luck,' as the saying goes."



"THE COSTER'S SERENADE."

II.

TRIUMPH.

On the evening of the 5th of February, 1891, Albert Chevalier made his first bow as a music-hall performer at the New London Pavilion, Piccadilly Circus. He received a princely reception on his appearance, and at the close of his entertainment was rewarded with a storm of cheers. All doubt as to whether his audience would comprehendingly grasp the intention of his songs dissolved—the desperate moment had been met and conquered—and the hitherto despised supporters of the music-hall proved conclusively that they could appreciate a fine art just as cordially as the high-priests of culture.

The difficulties opposing the comedian were not small. It is far easier for a music-hall performer to succeed in a theatre than for an actor to win laurels in a music-hall. He was one of the few actors of any prominence who had migrated to the halls; and his

success at the Strand and the Avenue in comedy, burlesque, and comic opera, made the public expect much from him. It is pleasant to know that he completely realised their expectations.

On the 2nd May, 1891, the *Star*, one of the first papers to acknowledge Chevalier's merit, wrote as follows (inter alia)

"All of a sudden the house wakes up with a start. The buzz is hushed, there is a rustle of expectant attention, and a cry of 'Sit down in front.' Number 13 has gone up at the wings—the number, says the programme, of 'Mr. Albert Chevalier, comedian.' A queer little figure bounces on the stage, and is received with a storm of hand-clapping. It is not a figure of ideal beauty. Phidias would hardly have chosen it for a model. A puny, crouching, angular figure—a sort of human ferret. A peaked cap over a close-cropped poll; a rag of coloured cloth where the rest of us wear a collar; a check-patterned jacket on the meagre body, turned up with velveteen; trousers trumpet-shaped, like those of a Mexican vaquero. 'Et puis, des boutons, des boutons, des boutons,' as the husband in 'Frou-Frou' says about the costume of the débardeur—everywhere rows of pearl buttons. It is all very ugly, very quaint—and very interesting. For you at

once feel yourself in presence of one of M. Zola's 'human documents.' It is a genuine type: the East-end costermonger in his habit as he lives. After the fantastic idealism of the earlier part of the performance, boneless gentleman simulating serpent, and ladies in crimson Mephistophelian doublet and hose—this figure of uncompromising realism is a welcome relief.

"And your sense of its ugliness vanishes as soon as it opens its mouth. You find that this Cockney Caliban has a heart. Nay, more: he is a sentimentalist, a Romeo of the hand-barrow, a Werther of the donkey cart. He sings a serenade to his lady-love. What could be more romantic, more sentimental, more suggestive of moonlight, mandolins, and *morbidezza* than a serenade? He calls up tender reminiscences in his mistress's breast. 'You ain't forgotten,' he says—

" You ain't forgotten 'ow we drove that day
Down to the Welsh 'Arp in my donkey shay,
Folks with a 'chy-ike' shouted 'ain't they smart?
You looked a Queen, me every inch a Bart.
Me in my pearlies felt a toff that day
Down at the Welsh 'Arp, which is 'Endon way.

(*The Coster's Serenade.*)

"And each verse ends with a plaintive whistle, like a long-drawn sigh. The mixture of the ludicrous and the pathetic, of vulgarity and simple natural affection

in this 'Coster's Serenade' is inexpressibly piquant. It is a masterpiece in its way. Credit must be given to the musician, too; the strange 'crooning' air, with its touch of Spanish-gipsy melody being, as Mr. Andrew Lang would say, a separate ecstasy. I have heard such music more than once in the orange plantations between Valencia and Castellon de las Planas.

"After the coster in love, the coster with a grievance. He has a friend, whose dispiriting company drives him to pessimism, tempts him to become a Schopenhauer of the slums.

"'E makes yer think that life's a blank,
A disgustin' dreary 'dezzit.'
It ain't exactly *wot* 'e sez
It's the n-a--a-asty wye 'e sez it!

(*The Nasty Way 'E Sez it.*)

"But pessimism cannot hold this blythe spirit long. Open-air life, the consciousness of many pearl buttons, the exhilaration of a rapid drive behind his 'moke' and alongside his 'missus,' soon give him saner views of the cosmos. He becomes even jubilant, and gives vent to his almost Pagan sense of the *joie de vivre* in another song, 'Wot Cher!'

"'Wot cher!' all the neighbours cried;
'Who're yer goin' to meet, Bill?'
'Have yer bought the street, Bill?'
Laugh! I thought I should have died,
Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road!

(*Wot Cher! or, Knock'd 'em in the Old Kent Road.*)

"You see all the ends of the earth, or at least the opposite postal districts of London, sing the glory of the coster—from the Old Kent Road to the Welsh 'Arp, which is down 'Endon way.

"The success of these three songs is immense. They have already become legendary. Last night I saw more grave legislators than one, hereditary and elected, listening to them enraptured. A globe-trotting friend of mine, just returned from a surfeit of all the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of the Far East, tells me in all his travels he has never heard anything so spontaneous, so typical, so racy of the soil. This I take leave to call fine art in the music hall. There are no forced effects, there is no shouting, no clowning.

"Mr. Chevalier's experience on the regular stage gives him an immense advantage ; it gives him what few of the others have acquired : restraint, distinction, style. His work is essentially artistic work.

"SPECTATOR."

III.

THE APPRECIATION.

And now from all quarters sounded the notes of appreciation. Rare indeed, is it, that a performer in the variety halls has marked such an epoch in their history ; and rarely, if ever before, has an actor by profession stepped from the well-ordered and carefully-managed theatre, with all its helpful surroundings, and so successfully overcome the anachronisms and incongruities existing in the music halls. The comedian remarked to me on one occasion :

“Fancy having to go on and sing the ‘Old Kent Road’ in a scene representing a Moorish palace, or the grand staircase of a baronial hall ! They really can have no sense of the incongruous, and the humour of it is somewhat subtle !”

Still, for all the difficulties and obstacles which presented themselves on every hand—absence of opportunity for rehearsal, meagre accessories, unsuitable,

often ludicrous, stage managements and settings—the sure, firm stroke was made, and the public response was sincere, sympathetic, and hearty. Offers for private engagements poured in from Princess Louise, Dowager Lady Vernon, Lady Jeune, Lady Osborne Morgan, Mrs. Asquith, Mrs. Labouchère, Duke of Westminster, Duke of Newcastle, Lord Rothschild. Canon Wilberforce, Dean Gregory (of St. Paul's), Mr. Alfred Rothschild, and numerous other celebrities; the newspapers eulogised, and the illustrated journals pictured this new bard of the barrow-boys, (the "Costers' Burns," as Byron Webber christened him), and soon the length and breadth of London was alive with his songs, and every club and coulisse knew in Albert Chevalier the man of the moment.

Perhaps the following Press extracts, letters, etc., may not be out of place.

Black and White, June 18th, 1892, contained a signed article by Arthur Symons, headed "The Coster's Laureate," in which the writer thus expresses himself:

" And that memorable first night at the London Pavilion a year ago was not merely the triumph of an individual: it was at once the statement and the achievement of a new art. . . . He has quietly taken his place at the head of the profession. There was no dispute, for none was possible. . . . He sang the 'Coster's Serenade'; it was a triumph, an unparalleled triumph, and from that night to this, Chevalier has never known the excitement of a

rival. . . . Simple, whole-hearted passion, infinite tenderness, with a humour that gives it relief, that gives it intensity—that is what lies at the root of the new art which Albert Chevalier has created."

This from an article in the *New Review*, October 1st, 1892:

" Thus Mr. Chevalier shows us the cockney coster as he lives and moves, and has his being, driving with his 'dona' in the Old Kent Road, or eating shrimps with 'Arriet down by the Welsh 'Arp, which is 'Endon wye. Delicacy, restraint, perfect finish, vigorous fidelity to life, are the qualities of this master among the variety artistes."

This from a signed article by the late Edmund Yates, which appeared in the *World*, December 7th, 1892:

"The make-up, allowing for a little over-cleanliness, which is, perhaps, essential, was life-like, and the songs were sung with great spirit and go. There was no touch of vulgarity throughout, and no exaggeration. . . . In certain of the songs, notably in the serenade or invocation to 'Arriet, and in one referring to the precocious cleverness of his little son, 'The Nipper,' there were notes of wholesome, natural, unaffected pathos, which gave me the idea that Mr. Chevalier was capable of far higher flights—had in him, indeed, the stuff of which a sound and interesting melodramatic actor, such as the late Sam Emery was made. . . . In the minor and pathetic key, he reminded me now and then of that extraordinary artist, Robson."

Rev. Dr. Momerie, being interviewed for *Winter's Magazine*, expressed himself as follows:

"The Stage and the Music Hall I find like other things—sometimes good, sometimes bad; but most

frequently the first. You have seen Albert Chevalier, of course ? "

"Who has not?" replied the interviewer.

"Ah ! yes ; indeed, everyone in London must have heard the Costers' Idol. I have a great admiration for Chevalier. I have never met a more consummate artist."

Morning Leader, May 30th, 1893.

"But to Mr. Chevalier, I take it, belongs the credit of having raised music-hall songs to the highest level they can attain. He is the Kipling of the music-hall, for he takes the common clay of Whitechapel, and fashions it into real works of art. He is an epoch maker, entitled to a lasting memory as a latter-day Monteverde, or Wagner."

From signed article by John Gray :

" Mr. Chevalier, a spirit of finer grain than most, an artist of ripe and subtle experience, proceeds in a manner of his own. . . . Taking his subject in one or another appropriate aspect, he makes of him an excuse for an artistic creation. The beholder, powerless to trace the means by which the effect is produced, wonders at the miracle, can only wonder. . . . The result is not a limited menage, but like every true work of art contains all art. . . . The single moment in the life of a single individual is revealed in all its human significance, and it is seen to be a key to all life and all emotion. . . . There are the few who have power to create the living soul of a thing. These latter are the magicians, the real artists. . . . No comparison is ultimately possible between talent and genius. Mr. Chevalier is of the few. Theory and formula and artifice are steps by which the artist rises to clear utterance of the thing that is in him. . . . The stars are still a long way from the telescope."

From Jerome K. Jerome. (The magazine referred to is the *Idler*, in which the words of "Our Little Nipper" were reproduced, by permission of Messrs. Reynolds and Co.)

"DEAR CHEVALIER,

"I have been asked to edit a big magazine, which will start in January. The main feature will be humour. The idea has occurred to me that if you are writing one of those brilliant coster songs of yours, it would be useful to both of us if you published it first in the magazine ; or could you write me one specially, you retaining all rights in the same ?

"Yours,

"JEROME K. JEROME."

FROM C. HADDON CHAMBERS, ESQ.

"DEAR CHEVALIER,

"To-morrow (Friday) night I am taking my wife and a brother author to hear you at the London Pavilion. I want them to hear the 'Coster's Serenade' and the 'Old Kent Road' song. 'Laugh, I thought I should have died,' when I heard you sing last. I need not tell you that you are a great artist.

"Yours sincerely,

"C. HADDON CHAMBERS."

Copy extract from a letter, written by Richard Harding Davis, of *Harper's Monthly* (America), author of "Van Bibber, and Other Stories," etc. :

"MY DEAR MR. CHEVALIER,

"

"I have a great deal to thank you for, as your performance has really been the newest and best sensation of my present visit.

"Sincerely yours,

"RICHARD HARDING DAVIS."

After appearing at a benefit matinée entertainment, at the Trafalgar Theatre, Chevalier received the following from the Entertainment Secretary :

(Extract.)

"DEAR MR. CHEVALIER,

"I hope you were gratified with your reception, and pleased with your audience at the matinée, on Tuesday. Princess Mary was delighted, and Princess May—our future Queen—sings your songs. She sent me down to ask for 'Wot cher.' Could you see how pleased Lord Salisbury was? He sat in front.

"Yours very truly,

"_____."

COPY OF LETTER FROM STACEY MARKS, ESQ.

"SIR,

"Allow me to write a line to thank you for the great pleasure you afforded my daughter and myself by your performance at the Tivoli on Thursday evening last.

"We heard you in the 'Lullaby,' 'My Old Dutch,' and 'Appy 'Ampstead.' To say that your rendering of the two first was the only touch of *art* in the entertainment is to say little. It was full of honest, manly pathos, and true in its simple unexaggeration of nature. I cannot pay you a higher compliment, from my point of view, than in saying you reminded me more than once of some of Robson's tenderest touches in the 'Porter's Knot.' I could write more, but you might think I was disposed to flatter you—so I only say again 'Many Thanks!' and ask you to believe me

"Yours faithfully and admiringly,

"H. STACEY MARKS.

"ALBERT CHEVALIER, ESQ."

Henri Clark, manager at the Metropolitan Music Hall, told Chevalier of an interesting incident which happened during his engagement there. An old man and his wife were sitting in the front row of the cheapest seats in the house. Chevalier came on and

sung "My Old Dutch." When he had finished—almost before he had time to get off the stage—the old man threw his arms round the old girl's neck and gave her a kiss which sounded all over the building!

Upon the comedian's recital tour, mentioned elsewhere, he received a splendid reception from the provincial, and Irish and Scots press, a few of whose opinions I give here :

Liverpool Daily Post.

"CHEVALIER.—This is the great singer of coster life—a true genius, who, with an instinct of character, of tune, of comedy, of eccentricity, and of perfect moral taste, has hit on a new type of comic singing, and is nightly displaying under the unlikeliest conditions all the pathos and all the humour of a Regnier or a Keeley. There has been nothing finer on any stage—nothing more poignant—nothing that ploughs into the emotions and turns up sympathies of sweeter savour than Chevalier's singing of 'My Old Dutch.'

.
"It takes barely five minutes. But there is not a dry eye in the crowded hall. The sympathy of everyone is seized on gently, surely, pathetically. That is Chevalier's nightly triumph. Those who, besides owning to brimming eyes can remember and compare, know that since Regnier dusted the *salon* in 'La Joie Fait Peur' at the Theatre Français, or Wigan gave his daughter, in the 'First Night, a little drop from a bottle to sustain her courage on the stage, there has been no acting of humble life more true and tremulous with the very life of dramatic power."

Irish Times.

"ALBERT CHEVALIER IN DUBLIN.—The Leinster Hall, large as it is, was packed last night, when the renowned Chevalier commenced a series of recitals, which will be brought to a close on Thursday evening. The more fashionable parts of the house especially were

crowded by society people, who were anxious to hear this poet of the people of East London. The utter absence of the vulgar in Mr. Chevalier's entertainment has won for him general admiration. He is educated and refined to begin with, and being blessed with an artistic and sympathetic nature, he has been enabled to depict in poetry that tenderer strain in humble life which is often suffocated by its sordid surroundings, but which exists nevertheless.

One moment he makes our eyes to fill with tears, the next he appears as 'Arry on 'Ampstead 'Eath, and we are compelled to laugh and sing and dance with him. At the same time we seem to see his good-natured 'Arriet joining him in the unconventional waltz."

In his inimitable song, 'My old Dutch,' we find the nearest approach in English to the Scottish song, 'John Anderson, my Jo'; like, yet unlike; but the same fealty and feeling expressed. Chevalier is throughout thoroughly natural and unextravagant. We have heard numerous imitators who reproduced his voice to perfection, but none have equalled him in interpretation. There they all have failed. Mr. Chevalier was more than generous in the number of songs he sang, and for every one he was enthusiastically encored."

The Scotsman (CHEVALIER IN EDINBURGH).

Every seat was filled, every available corner was crowded, hundreds were turned away from the door.

The field he has chosen for his work he has exploited thoroughly. He has been down among the people he sings about—one would almost think he was to the manner born—and has studied their character in all its phases—humorous, amorous, and pathetic. In his own field, Mr. Chevalier is certainly as great an artist in his song pictures of East London life as Du Maurier is with his pencil in depicting modern West End Society, or Jan Van Beer with his brush in hitting off the foibles of the 'chic' Parisian belle. Though the most of the songs he sung might be called 'comic,' they had this outstanding feature that there was not about them one touch of buffoonery, not a suspicion of vulgarity. There was in all of them 'that touch of nature which makes the world kin,' and set, as they



CHEVALIER SINGING "TICK-TOCK."

were, to admirably appropriate tunes, and rendered with rare dramatic power, they delighted the vast audience in no ordinary degree. One thing is very outstanding in Mr. Chevalier's art is worthy of notice, and that is his great power of facial expression and descriptive gesture. It is really wonderful, and of course, adds greatly to the success of his singing.

Each line of each song, whether it be grave or gay, is illustrated not only by varied intonation, but by picturesque gesture and expression, and the completed product is a finished work of art. Last night Mr. Chevalier did not spare himself. He gave no fewer than ten songs, and among these were all his favourite ditties. It would be hard to say which found most favour, 'My Old Dutch' with its pathos turning almost to tears, the intense passion put into 'The Coster's Serenade,' the light and lively touch with which he treated 'Mrs. 'Awkins,' or the rollicking fun of 'The Old Kent Road,' which closed the concert. The applause was so great at the end of this last song that Mr. Chevalier was constrained to say a few words of thanks for the heartiness of his reception."

Bradford Observer.

"MR. CHEVALIER IN BRADFORD.—Last night Mr. Albert Chevalier made his first appearance in Bradford, at the Mechanic's Institute. Mr. Chevalier may fairly claim to have done for the English music-hall song, what Gilbert and Sullivan have done for English comic opera. Before those twin stars of the lyric stage rose above the horizon, it was too often true that comic opera was insipid when it was not vulgar, and vulgar when it was not insipid. The same remark, expressed in much stronger terms, is generally applicable to the English music-hall song, and to Mr. Chevalier belongs the honour—no mean honour, if we accept the philosophy of the saying, 'Let who will rule the people, so long as I make their songs'—of renovating this despised article, giving it artistic form, warming it with pathos and humour, and gilding it with sentiment and fancy.

The audience which crowded the Mechanic's Institute last night was an unmistakeable tribute to the position which Mr. Chevalier has won. It was not the audience which turns up at any popular entertainment, but was largely drawn from the ranks of those who make

a point of seeing anything first-class which is given in the town; be it lecture, music, or play. At the close of the performance there was an array of carriages at the entrance to the Institute, suggestive of a Subscription Concert.

Mr. Chevalier met with a most flattering reception, the warmth of which increased as the programme proceeded. He sang altogether ten songs, most of them already more or less known to his audience, and, with one exception, all of his own writing.

Mr. Chevalier's rendering was in every instance the work of an artiste. His humour was rich, and the tender passages were given with a delightful touch. His powers of imitation are of the first order; every gesture was a stroke of character.

At the close of the performance he received quite an ovation."

Manchester Guardian. (RETURN VISIT.)

"MR. ALBERT CHEVALIER'S RECITALS.—The praise of Mr. A Chevalier as an exponent of coster pathos and humour has been so widely sounded, that the great size and enthusiasm of the audience at the Free Trade Hall last night could occasion no surprise.

The music alone of many of these songs would indeed serve to lift them above the level of a mere local popularity.

The moral tone of these songs is sweet and manly; the pathetic in them never becomes mawkish; and praise and gratitude are due to the artist who, in achieving their popularity, has also made a real improvement in the taste of his public. Of last night's performance it is, perhaps, the best commendation to say that Mr. Chevalier more than satisfied the great expectations of his audience."

Manchester Courier. (RETURN VISIT.)

"ALBERT CHEVALIER AT THE FREE TRADE HALL.—Long before the doors were opened yesterday evening, a considerable number of people thronged the main entrance to the Free Trade Hall,

anxious to secure the best seats available for the first of Mr. Albert Chevalier's recitals. By eight o'clock the building was crowded. Mr. Brian Daly has well said of this clever artist that 'he never loses sight of those high human ideals that dignify and exalt nature. He, like the true poet that he is, has found in a neglected and alienated class a darker poetry, rugged, perhaps unlovely in its form, but, nevertheless, full of those stirring emotions, those kindred touches of nature that raise the lowliest life from the dead level of the commonplace.' "

Brighton Standard.

"MR. CHEVALIER'S RECITALS.—The aspect of the Brighton Dome on Thursday evening, when Mr. Chevalier gave his first recital, was suggestive more of a 'Patti' concert, at the height of the Brighton season, than anything else one could liken it to. The vast area of the Dome was crowded with well-dressed people amongst whom might be discerned the "light and leading" of the town, and the cream of Brighton's fashionable society. Mr. Chevalier's exquisite humour was cordially and demonstratively appreciated.

.
Mr. Chevalier repeated his recital yesterday afternoon and evening to big houses."

Leeds Express (RETURN VISIT.)

"MR. CHEVALIER'S RECITALS.—No one remembering what the music hall was before Mr. Chevalier's advent, and knowing what it is now, can fail to acknowledge the influence he has wielded. Mr. Chevalier came to stay, and year by year as he has been moulding public taste, so has he been developing the seemingly endless characteristics of the coster. The idylls of the coster are, in their way, as remarkable a literary expression of the time as the Idylls of the King.

.
The Albert Hall was filled in all parts, by a most critical and appreciative audience, who gave Mr. Chevalier no rest.

.
Mr. Chevalier gives excellent value, and his recitals grow more attractive each visit."

Some remarks of Chevalier, *re* Promenades and the Sale of Drink in the auditorium of a music hall, were so misrepresented by certain temperance advocates, members of the County Council, that he was compelled to write and explain what he really had said. He received the following reply :—

“ L. C. C.,

“ Spring Gardens,

“ March 6th, 1894.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I am much obliged for your interesting letter. The Theatres' Committee will, I need not assure you, be glad to consider your views as to matters upon which we willingly recognise you as a great authority.

“ Sincerely yours,

“ RICHARD ROBERTS,

“ Vice-Chairman.

“ A. CHEVALIER, ESQ.”

Mention of the County Council reminds me that even Mrs. Chant has had a word of praise for Chevalier. The following is an extract from a speech delivered by her at Bristol, and reported in the *Western Daily Press*, January 28th, 1895. Someone having sung “ My Old Dutch ” — *without* Chevalier's permission

—"Mrs. Ormiston Chant, when the applause which greeted her had ceased, asked those present to think of what they owed to men like Mr. Chevalier for making songs like that which had just been sung, that expressed the finest sentiments in the human heart; who had voiced themes that had been there, but before were not voiced, and had done so in language understood of the people. Think of 'Mrs. 'Enery 'Awkins,' 'Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road,' and others which had taken the place of the boozy, fighting, hateful songs which too often in former years were the songs supposed to belong to music halls. She had sat in a music hall in the poorest part of London where 'My Old Dutch' was being sung, and where the whole audience took up the chorus, and again and again repeated it until one could not listen without the tears coming into one's eyes, and the feeling arising that music like that taking hold of the public heart might be the means of introducing into lives a tenderness and a sentiment not hitherto displayed (applause)."

Chevalier assures me he can remember *no* audience taking up the chorus of "My Old Dutch," and repeating it again and again. Such a demonstration might have helped to popularise the "Old Kent Road," but would have seriously interfered with the success of his

performance in a song like "My Old Dutch." The fact that the boys in the gallery *refrained* from "joining in" was, he always considered, the greatest compliment they could pay him. He tells me that garbled versions are frequently given at concerts and other entertainments, notwithstanding the fact that his publishers make it a rule to allow no one but himself to sing his songs, without their special written permission. Chevalier is grateful to Mrs. Chant for the compliment paid him, but he does not care to accept praise which may belong to any gentleman who thinks proper to ignore the printed notice on all copies of his songs issued by Messrs. Reynolds and Co.

As the artist rose in public favour, so did appreciation of his professional worth elicit many flattering and substantial offers from theatrical managers. Amongst others, Mr. Frank Wyatt sought him for the comic opera, "Erminie," as did his late manager, Mr. George Alexander, for the part subsequently played by Edward Righton, in "Liberty Hall." Miss Annie Hughes asked him to play the late David James's part in "Our Boys," at the Crystal Palace; Mr. John Hollingshead offered him £100 a-week to play a strong part in a new drama; and the promoters of "Morocco Bound," at the Shaftesbury, tried hard to get Chevalier for £100



CHEVALIER SINGING "MY OLD DUTCH."

a-week *to sing between the acts!* This, however, the Pavilion and Tivoli Syndicate, with whom our comedian held a special contract, refused to allow.

Charles Brookfield very much wished Chevalier to perform *Joe* in "The Burglar and the Judge," a piece written by Brookfield and F. C. Philips.

Numerous offers for America, Australia, and the Colonies were advanced, all of which, for the time being, Chevalier was compelled, on account of pre-arranged engagements, to refuse.

IV.

CONCERNING HIS SONGS.

Over and over again the question has been asked, "Does Chevalier write his own songs?" Indeed, I have been personally credited with their authorship; and, upon one occasion, the startling news reached me that I was the "ghost" well paid to keep in the background, there to mysteriously spin out coster effusions by the yard! This is the first opportunity I have had of publicly denying the mistaken notion. Those who know Chevalier intimately, know also that he is a gentleman, and, to the larger public, let me say that in no case has he claimed authorship of any lyric which was not absolutely his own composition. Of the forty-six songs, now published by Reynolds and Co., he has written thirty-five. Those penned by other men bear their authors' names in every instance.*

Here is Chevalier.

[* The songs now number fifty—about forty of which are Chevalier's creations.]

"Tell me something about the songs—how they were written, and so forth."

"Much has been argued about the sentiment expressed in them," he said. "But you know, old man," (a favourite expression of his) "the coster, or the cockney, is a human being, and his sentiment, in his degree, is as tender and poetic as a 'noble Romeo's. This reflection was forced upon me as I was strolling along the tow-path of the river, near Hammersmith, a few years back. I remember it was a summer's evening, and I saw just ahead of me a coster and his girl; his arm was around her neck, and hers encircled his waist. Very pretty, I thought. They kissed one another now and again. Prettier still! Presently they became kittenish (just like ordinary folk!), there was a laugh, he seized her hat with its wealth of feather, and shambled off with it. She pursued him—they dodged—she thumped his broad back, and gave him a 'goffer'—which is costerese for flattening his hat. After a brief struggle, he clasped her round the waist, kissed her, took off his damaged hat, and placed it on her black curls, and covered his own close-cropped poll with her white straw and ostrich plumes; then he drew her head to his shoulder, and they slowly moved along singing 'Annie Rooney' to the moonlight."

"It impressed you?"

"Yes—it produced 'The Coster's Courtship' for me."

"What about the 'Serenade'?"

"I think John Crook suggested a serenade to me—at any rate, he had heard me sing the 'Courtship,' was very pleased with the song, and said he would like to write one with me. I accordingly wrote 'The Coster's Serenade,' and he set it to music. About this time I had written a musical sketch, in conjunction with George Capel, called 'The Phonograph,' in which the principal part was a costermonger, and it occurred to me to drop in the 'Serenade' as one of the musical numbers. It was whilst I was playing at the Avenue. Mr. George Alexander wanted a first piece to precede 'Dr. Bill,' and 'The Phonograph' was read to him in the green-room of the theatre. He, however, needed a serious piece, although he told me he liked the song very much indeed. I think John Crook's music to it is lovely."

"Both words and music of 'The Courtship' are your own?"

"Yes; the same as of 'The Future Mrs. 'Awkins.' I was staying in Brighton. One day I was just fooling about on the piano, and somehow struck

on this melody. G. W. Hunter, the comedian, who was present, suggested that it would make a capital song, and 'Liza,' was the result. 'The nasty way 'e sez it,' and 'Yer can't 'elp likin' 'im," were written upon the backs of old envelopes and odd bits of paper as I was riding home after an evening at the Green-Room Club. The latter song had its living original in Mr. ———; (you know him, of course). He was a man who did the most annoying things, in fact, he was a confirmed and confounded nuisance; but there was a weird humour underlying his very faults, which made you like him in spite of yourself.

"Of course, you remember when we wrote 'Our Bazaar'?"

"Yes," I replied, "it's now more than two years since."

This lyric, just produced by Chevalier on his present tour [Summer 1894] with great success was a joint effort. It was written at 38, Wingate Road, the comedian's old abode, between four and five on one morning in April, 1893, after we had returned together from the Green-Room Club. I think one of us had suggested that the incidents at a charity bazaar would make a good musical sketch or comedietta, "or a good

song," said Chevalier. That was the origin of it—and an hour or so later, the song was completed.*

The music is by Bond Andrews.

"“Knock’d ’em in the Old Kent Road,”” said Chevalier, upon my reference to it, “happened in this way. One Sunday I was in my bedroom shaving, my brother Auguste being downstairs at the piano. All at once, he struck into the melody, and the idea of its making a capital song at once occurred to me. I rushed downstairs to him. ‘What tune’s that?’ I asked. ‘Oh! a little dance of mine,’ he replied. Then he played it again. All I can say is, I never left the house until ‘Wot Cher!’ was written.”

Our friend, Alfred H. West, composer of “Tick-Tock,” one day brought a tune to Isleworth. He lost his last train home, and Chevalier suggested that he and I should write a lyric to West’s melody. West was going to stay the night, and whilst he was playing marches and fantasias in the drawing-room, we stole away to a building, apart from the house and used as an office, and then and there “Our Court Ball” was

* “Our Bazaar” has lately (July, 1895) created a stir in Plymouth, one or two clerics rushing into print to condemn the song as “ridiculing religion.” The satire has struck home, as we intended it should; but “religion” is not “ridiculed” thereby, because the orthodox charity bazaar is far removed from religion.—B. D.

written. When we returned to the drawing-room, West had gone to bed; so we very unceremoniously awoke him and made him get up to try the song over. I think it was about three o'clock, a.m.; but West was very pleased with the lyric, and forgave our enthusiasm.

In the late Summer of 1892, the notion of a Darby and Joan song began to take shape. One evening, as we were driving from the Royal to the Pavilion, Chevalier, binding me to solemn silence, said:

"An old labouring man is the character: you know—corduroys, doe-skin waistcoat—short thick serge jacket, shapeless old hat. I've got the make-up in my mind's eye. But the song—I'm going to play on the word 'pal.' 'Wot a wife to me she's bin, an' wot a *pal!*'"

The idea struck me at once. These words were all he had thought of so far; but I knew the whole matter of the song was in his mind, and only required to take shape. The next time I was in his company he read me the chorus, which he told me was written to a tune he had heard some years before, and he wondered if it was obtainable. He whistled it over, and I recognised it as the air of a song which was sung by Mr. Billy Emerson, some years since, during the visit

of Haverley's Mastodon Minstrels to Her Majesty's Theatre. Chevalier looked rather glum when I told him this, for he had set his heart on the melody. However, there was no help for it—he must get another.

A few nights afterwards he read me two verses of the song, written under peculiar circumstances. He had walked from the neighbourhood of Piccadilly to Collins's Music Hall at Islington one evening, and on his way he stopped now and again at a lamp-post, to scribble down the lines in his pocket-book as they occurred to him. Subsequently, the third verse was added.

Thus far, not a soul but ourselves knew of the song.

One Saturday night, I accompanied him to his house, and for the first time heard the beautiful melody which his brother had set to the song. I must confess that no melody has ever touched me so deeply since the pathos of "Auld Robin Gray" came to my hearing. The song itself was a wedding of "perfect music unto noble words," a true comedy of a humble life—a clear, glad cry of faith and love—a hymn to an ideal!

"She's stuck to me through thick an' thin,

When luck was out, when luck was in :

Ah! wot a wife to me she's bin,

'An wot a *pal* ! "



CHEVALIER SINGING "WOT'S THE GOOD O' HANYFINK."

Chevalier first sang "My Old Dutch" at the Alhambra, in Brighton, and the late David James having heard it, suggested that the song would bear a fourth verse, which was afterwards written.

Upon its production at the London Tivoli, in November, 1892, it proved once and for all that the singer was not limited by conventionality, and that his art was of wider range, and fuller of subtle sympathy than even his warmest admirers may have deemed. There was no false note, no exaggerated sentiment, no "new" emotion; it was that simple, earnest, human yearning which calls forth a loving response from the hearts of all good men and women.

The Press united in its praise, and Chevalier's performance elicited from that fine poet and litterateur, Robert Buchanan, the following letter :

"Jan. 17th, 1893.

"DEAR MR. CHEVALIER,

"May I congratulate you on your new song, "The Dear Old Dutch," which I heard you sing on Saturday evening. It is infinitely sweet and beautiful—a breath of pure human tenderness which ennobles the atmosphere of even a Music Hall. The feeling and the expression are alike perfect, and taken with the rest of the work you are doing, a precious boon to the public.

I think your songs unique in ballad literature, and your own art in rendering them something to admire and envy. I am glad to see that the public responds so enthusiastically to such admirable work. You are doing more good than perhaps you realise, and you deserve all the success that can possibly come to you.

“Forgive my sending this poor testimony of appreciation—it is meant as something far more than a mere compliment—and believe me, with kind regards,

“Yours truly,

“ROBERT BUCHANAN.

“ALBERT CHEVALIER, ESQ.”

The pulpit likewise paid its tribute to the far-reaching influence of the song and the singer; when, having visited Liverpool during his Summer tour in 1893, the artist received from the Vicar of St. Mary's, the frank expression of his appreciation, a reprint of whose letter is appended.

“S. MARY'S LODGE,

“CROXTETH ROAD,

“LIVERPOOL,

“May 31st, 1893.

“DEAR SIR,

“Having always welcomed everything beautiful and human in art as a natural ally in the endeavour to raise

and sweeten, life I venture to thank you sincerely for your Coster Songs, which I have heard here in Liverpool to-day. Their humour and pathos alike touched me to the core, while the real refinement of their language and your interpretation of it were quite above cavil.

"You have given high artistic expression to a side of humanity which has long been supposed to belong entirely to the seamy side of life, and you have made thousands feel the touch of nature in it which makes the whole world kin.

" 'My Old Dutch' is beyond criticism ; but I may tell you, perhaps, without too much egoism, that I ventured to quote you a few Sundays ago as one of those with a special 'Grace of God' to awaken in hearts we parsons cannot reach, appreciation of a faithful woman's comradeship in the hard battle of life.

"Wishing you much more very real success, and thanking you for much pleasure.

"I am, faithfully yours,

"T. W. M. LUND.

"ALBERT CHEVALIER, ESQ."

Perhaps the following critique from *The Daily Telegraph* of September 23rd, 1893, reviewing "The Nipper's Lullaby" (by Mel. B. Spurr and Bond

Andrews) and "My Old Dutch," at the London Pavilion, may appropriately close this chapter.

"It has been a debated question for many a long year how far it was possible to devulgarise the ordinary music-hall entertainment. The pessimists declared it was impossible. They remembered the days of the coarse brawlers of the tavern hall. But there were some of us who maintained that the better the entertainment the more it would be appreciated: the more human it became, so it would become more popular; the more graceful and sympathetic the music, so it would win itself to the hearts of the people; the more artistic the performer, so he would gain the hearty and honest suffrages of the people. It is not too much to say that Mr. Albert Chevalier has had much—very much—to do with the wholesome reform of the modern Music Hall. An artist by instinct, he left the stage, where it was impossible, except by a miracle, that his delicate and sympathetic style of singing could have made a very decided mark, and, with laudable courage, he gave his talent to the common people. He understood that there was a warm heart under a corduroy jacket, a vein of sentiment even in the lowly costermonger, and he gave us the ballads which are now household words. The pessimists declared it was all a lucky hit, a fluke, a coincidence. When the people were weary of the gentleman with the many-buttoned 'fakements,' his 'Liza, and his 'donah,' away would go Mr. Albert Chevalier. 'There is no lasting success there,' they said; 'it is a mere flash in the pan.' But they did not, and they never will, recognise the fact that an artist is by the public recognised as much at the London Pavilion as at the Albert Hall. The public—high or low—never turns its back on what is good. So they awaited the return of Albert Chevalier with anxiety. Was his talent an accident or an actuality? That question should have been decided last night, when the artist, with very little voice, but exquisite feeling, smoked his pipe by the side of a baby's cradle, and sang to all these drinkers and smokers a *berceuse* which touched every heart in the hall. What was it all about? A costermonger was singing a lullaby to his first child. It was 'their very own.' This rough hawker of greens and carrots from Covent Garden was as tender and



CHEVALIER SINGING "THE NIPPER'S LULLABY."

delicate as any woman. When he puffed at his clay, he blew away the fumes of the tobacco, lest they should disturb the sleeping child. It was the 'Nipper's' birthday on the morrow, and he had bought it a penny trumpet; and then he told us all the wonderful ideas he had—this despised costermonger—concerning his marvellous child. Now this is a very risky thing to do on any stage. A baby and a cradle have the elements of laughter and ridicule in them. But then Mr. Albert Chevalier is an artist, and where art is, ridicule is impossible. He deeply affected his careless, light-hearted audience with the supreme love of a London costermonger for his first-born. But the power of mind over matter was even more clearly shown when the same acute observer of human feeling sang 'My Old Dutch,' a little gem of acting and expression. An old man smoking his pipe gives utterance to his love for an honest and faithful wife. He describes her constant charms, and does not disdain mention of her often failings. But there is one refrain in his rough old heart, 'We were such pals.' The method of delivery, of expression, of delicate changes of manner, can scarcely be described, but those who have heard such varied styles of sympathetic singing as Dejazet, De Soria, Lafont, William Wrighton (the ballad composer), and Fred Leslie, would give a place among such artists to Albert Chevalier. We have seen no such true pathos in the character of an old man since Robson played in the 'Porter's Knot.' There is no power, because power is not wanted, but there is a touch of human nature, with which the sensible public is consoling itself with on the Music Hall Stage. If the theatres refuse to give it, they will find it surely elsewhere. The horrors of life seem to amuse the better educated folk nowadays, the simplicities and beauties of life delight the people."

V.

BETWEEN THE "TURNS." [1892.]

"Come round with me, old man." I accept the invitation, and at Collins's, Islington Green, we chat with burly Mr. Herbert Sprake, the good-natured proprietor, who has much to say of songs and singers, and is very complimentary to a small volume of verse of mine, lately published, and which owes its appearance in public to my good friend—the hero of these records. Presently Chevalier has to prepare for his performance, and leaves me standing close to the saloon bar, where two men have taken up positions, and are discussing music hall matters over a pipe and glass. Presently, the chairman, John Read [himself an old-time singer, and author of numerous songs] announces Chevalier's name, and one of the men alluded to, remarks to his companion, "Wonder Chevalier don't retire, I s'pose 'e's a millionaire pretty nearly by this time." The other shrugs his shoulders. "Well," he replies, "I

reckon 'e's got a bit ; but they're all alike. Easy come an' easy go." Having vented his opinions on artists' improvidences, he changed the subject, and asked, "What do you think of 'im ?" His companion hesitated a moment, as he listened to the refrain of "The Nipper's Lullaby," which the comedian was at the moment singing, and then answered, "Oh, 'e's orlright, *when he don't sing through 'is nasals !*"

On our way to the Tivoli, Chevalier tells me the plot of an opera, which he contemplates writing, and adds, "We'll do it together, if you like, old man."

I do like ; in fact, I am proud to collaborate with him, and I tell him so.

"Very well, come to Shepperton to-night with me. I can give you a day's fishing to-morrow, and we'll talk it over."

"But I'm not ready. I've no things, and am too far from home to obtain them and catch the train."

"Oh, that's all right. Twelve o'clock the train goes. I can find you—"

The brougham stops outside the Tivoli—the "luggage" opens the door, and says, "They're waiting for you, sir !" Chevalier springs out and vanishes, leaving me to my reflections.

What a convincing man he is. He will make a pro-

posal to you, and assent to it on your behalf in the same breath. And I am not the only one attracted by his magnetism—there is no other word for it—except it is sympathy. Yes, that's it. There must be something very hard in the nature that Chevalier cannot reach. Sympathy's the word—and sympathy to a large extent doubtless prompted the following little occurrence. It is worth relating, because it shows how close in touch an artist often is with his public, which is more generous at heart than is usually admitted.

Chevalier had finished his "turn" at the Tivoli, and was just off to the London Pavilion, when a cheery-looking young fellow, with a decidedly "horsey" appearance, stopped him on his way to the brougham, with :

"'Ullo—Albert ! 'Ow are you ? "

The comedian looked a bit puzzled, and replied, " I think you've made a mistake, I don't remember meeting you before."

The "horsey" one laughed. "No," said he, "you don't know *me* ; but I've orfen seen you. I've just bin inside the 'all, an' 'eard yer give the 'Old Dutch.' It's a —— fine song ! Come an' 'ave a drink ! "

"No, thank you," replied Chevalier, "I'm due at the Pavilion now. Good-night."

And he turned to go, but the fellow seized his hand immediately, with a purely generous impulse, and said :

“Sorry yer can’t stop, Albert ; ’ere’s the price of a glass of ale—treat yerself !”

Speaking of the Pavilion, I am reminded of a pathetic incident which occurred there. It was related to me by the comedian, and I give it in his own words :

“I had just finished my last turn. I came off the stage in my make-up as an old labouring man. I received a card : a gentleman wanted to see me on business. I obtained the necessary permission, and he was shown into my dressing-room. I should say he was between sixty and seventy. He had come to know if I would sing at a concert he was organising. We sat talking for some minutes, and I could not help noticing that he treated me as a man of at least his own age, if not his senior ; he was not connected with the theatrical profession, and, consequently, knew very little about the art of ‘making-up.’ Suddenly, remembering an appointment, I tore my wig off, *and rubbed out the painted wrinkles*. His face changed also, as in tones I shall never forget, I heard him murmur, ‘*I wish I could do that.*’”

The gentleman was the late Sir John Astley.

VI.

UP THE RIVER.

Tucker Purdue, proprietor of a punt at Shepperton-on-Thames, in a character well worth an acquaintance. His sense of humour is not particularly quick, and he is very grave and reticent on all matters save angling—indeed it is life, love, and religion to him; and in ecstatic moments, when his steel-blue eyes look into the emptiness of air, he perchance dreams of shining rivers, and murmurous rushes, and of fairy fish that rise obediently to the temptations of the luring worm. There is something ruggedly picturesque about this weather-worn old fisherman, with his hoary hair and lined face, and his general bearing of unpretentious independence.

It is of not much use trying a joke on Tucker—he always laughs at the wrong moment, and your

climax is reached in silence. He is monosyllabic if you endeavour to draw him into conversation, unless the subject be angling. That is the Alpha and Omega of his existence—in his opinion all roads lead to the river, and there is no “catch” in any other occupation.

Well, Chevalier (whom Tucker called Shillaylee), Robert Nainby, now in the company at the Gaiety, and I, arrive at Shepperton for a day's fishing. There's Tucker at the end of the lane, armed with tackle, and blinking in the sunlight, awaiting us. Soon the punt is slowly moving up-stream towards D'Oyly Carte's island-home, near which Tucker lays to, fastens our boat to the poles, and prepares our lines, now and again turning his dreamy eyes towards the pastures spreading far away on either hand. Whilst he dreams at his work, Chevalier tells a story. —

“I suppose one must take intended compliments in good part. Being on the river reminds me that upon one occasion I accepted an invitation to attend a small party at a house close at hand. During the evening I found myself alone with a young fellow in the drawing-room. I sat at the piano and just played a bar or two of one of Chopin's pieces. My companion, with a touch of sympathy in his voice, said,

“‘Ah, I see which way your tastes lie. *How you must hate the muck you’re doing now!*’

“Something similar occurred at the London Alhambra. I had a bit of a cold, and couldn’t sing that night, so on my way home I dropped in to see a turn or two. A swellish fellow came up to me, and after a few preliminaries, concluded with :

“‘I admire you awf’lly !—Heard you once sing a French song. That’s *your* form !—I s’pose you *must do those coster things?*—*What a pity!*’

“Another young gentleman of the genus Johnnie complimented me upon a certain occasion by remarking that the rendering of my songs had given him the greatest pleasure *unhung!*”

Here Tucker handed us our rods, and the sport commenced.

“The ‘coster thing’ seemed to be in great request upon one occasion, I remember,” continued Chevalier. “I had promised to sing at a benefit smoking concert, and took with me the band parts of half a dozen of my better known songs. I arrived rather late, it being after I had finished my usual evening’s work, and I must confess to being not a little annoyed at discovering that several amateur singers had exhausted my repertoire earlier in the evening.”

And thus the day wears away. We are in a back-water of the Thames, beyond Shepperton lock—there is a calm peace everywhere—and the translucent waters are indescribably beautiful with the glory of a sublime sunset. The punt is propelled along with mechanical movements of Tucker's pole, and the swish of the stream is almost the only sound heard. The religious silence of the scene is communicated to us, and nothing more is said until we land at Tucker's boat-house. There is about a mile to walk before we dine at Chevalier's cottage, and on the way he tells us of a curious coincidence, which was brought to his notice immediately after producing "My Old Dutch."

He had used the same horse (or, to be correct, mare) and brougham for more than a year; in fact, they were the same referred to in an incident recorded early in these chronicles. When the coachman discovered that Chevalier was singing the above-mentioned song, he stated that the mare had been known in the stables for some years as the "Old Dutch."

"Here is a little anecdote," he continued. "It was related to me by Herbert Sprake, I fancy :

"You know that I occasionally render, by way of encore, the chorus to the last verse of 'Wot cher!' in French. Well, Sprake overheard one of his audience

ask another what he thought of it, and the other—a local sweep, I believe—remarked,—‘ Think of it? W’y it’s the finest bit o’ back-slang I’ve ’eerd for years!’ ”

At Home and Away.

At Home and Away.

I.

THE DEN AT ISLEWORTH.

Probably no other music-hall performer has such a collection of letters that mark the internal influence of an artist's work. From all classes and conditions, Chevalier is the recipient of epistolary expressions, eulogistic and convincing; humorous, aye, and often touching tributes to his humanising and powerful studies. The same post that brings a pean of praise, may also bear the plea of the stricken and fallen in the hard battle of life—a cry for help to the man whose genius is born of his humanity, and who might never have been the artist he is, had he been less human. There is a maxim which says, "there's no charity in giving away that which you want yourself." It is self's philosophy which knows not self-denial; and it is not always charity which is emblazoned in a "list of subscribers."

Occasionally, in sampling his collection, one comes across a letter, which, to the person who reads without

thinking, might appear even funny—it is the letter which recommends the writer of it as a man who is in every way fitted to become a “star” of the first magnitude if he only had the opportunity to shine. The communication is generally full of pathetic egotism, which it is impossible wholly to condemn, and usually elicits from Chevalier a good-tempered and wholesome letter of advice, that the business is “not all beer and skittles,” but the result of years of hard work, of which the aspirant only sees the glamour, not the drudgery.

So much does the present form of music-hall entertainment commend itself to the community that the good people, who, probably a half-dozen years ago, would have loudly denounced the Variety Devil and all its works, now actually write to its votaries on behalf of aspiring sons and daughters, who wish to swell the over-crowded ranks of performers, and who fondly imagine that a successful and busy man has nothing else to do with his days but employ them in dispensing advice (*gratis*) to every embryo “star.”

Here is a copy of an interesting document, the signatories’ names and address being, of course, omitted.

“SIR,

“I have read your advertisement this morning in the *Telegraph*, and wishing to gane a livlyhood

on the stage, we shall be very much abliged to you if you will take us hunder hand, we would not mind signing artikles for about A 12 month, as we have already a little nolidge of the stage, as we have been in two comic ballets and don't care for that biseness, we would rather be in the theatre biseness; and would you be so kind as to send us word by return of poast, what you could alow us per week, as we are now hearning hour living in a sawmill, and we are wiling to do anything you want us to do, as I have no doubt you will find us a little truble to you at first, but I hope we shall soon be perfect. We just want anuff a weak to keep us deasent, will (while) we are with you, and we will do all that lays in hour power to return the complement, and alow us to remain.

" Yours truly,

" * * * * "

A subtle humourist, writing from sylvan Surrey, is responsible for the following :

* * * *

" DEAR SIR,

" As I am entertaining the idea of entering your profession as a vocation in life, I thought I would write and ask your advice as to the proper way of going about it. Of course I don't know anything about the agents one sees advertised in various papers,

and as I know no one in *the* profession, I decided on consulting some eminent personage as to the best way for coming 'out,' and when 'out,' to *stop* 'out.' I have written two songs which I think will suit very well, and I have only to be heard to be appreciated. . In short, I have everything ready but the harmless, but necessary, engagement. Can you help me ?

"Yours faithfully,

" * * * * "

Our comedian has received scores of these letters, couched in similar language, many of them bearing the impress of deep strivings and inexpressible ambitions, which are dreams in youth and often dead hopes in maturity.

The following communication, written in pencil upon a post-card, and addressed to Chevalier at the Tivoli, came from the East End of London.

"Pray remember me for good. Canst thou not help a poor devil, who is *ill*, POOR, FRIENDLESS, STARVING ?—Growing blind, too !

" * * * * "

An illustration of Chevalier, cut from a journal and pasted on a piece of paper, was forwarded to him with these lines written thereon :—

"TO MR. CHEVALIER,

"A valentine of a coster and a true and happy heart it is. Happier than some of our swells. Blessed be Mr. Chevalier for saying a good word for the costers, not like some of the pros, fools, running down poor working men."

The number of songs sent to Chevalier for perusal is enormous. These are mostly indifferent, often inane, very seldom good. Songs written on every conceivable subject and in every variety of metre and verse—incomprehensible jingles—discordant and outrageous rhymes—pour in ceaselessly. Some are unintentionally funny, particularly those intended by their authors to be sentimental; yet, here again, while their utter senselessness compels a smile, one cannot help pausing to think that, hidden away behind the ludicrous result is the first intention. The man who wrote this or that piece of silly sentiment, probably was never more intentionally serious in his life, and the fact that, after having carried that intention into effect, he confidently submitted it to criticism, seems to prove that he was perfectly sincere all through, and that he doubtless believed in his own ingenuity and ability. The return, therefore, of his rejected manuscript was very likely a blow to his hopes and aspirations, which

he would persuade himself was quite unmerited and unjust.

The following is one of many examples in the comedian's possession :

“ MY LITTLE PRIDE.

“ She had golden hair, and such curly eyes,
That shone like stars, and blue as the skies,
A better child you could not find,
She was so gentle, good, and kind.

.
.

[Here occur two lines, which, in justice to the author, I omit. I do not think he realised their full, or double, meaning !] The following couplet concludes the verse :

“ But her little tongue no more will wag,
I cannot help but feeling sad.

Chorus—

“ For she was my little pride,
My pretty little pet;
Always happy when by my side,
Her I can't forget.
She had the prettiest face I've seen, (*Turn over*)
She was an angel, no mistake,
Was my darling little Kate! ”

Chevalier does not know whether the succeeding “song and dance” was intended by its author to be sung, *and* danced by him. I found it amongst his

papers, and, as an example of the amorous and terpsichorean combined, it is certainly rich.

“OUR PLIGHTED TROTH.

“One day wand’ring in the fields so green,
 There I met my lover smiling happy, and so gay,
 Birds were singing, everything serene,
 Nature smiled her brightest, ’twas a summer’s day—
 My timid lover whispered in my ear,
 ‘I love you, dearest,’ and his voice spoke fear ;
 Then he looked with wonder—
 Cast his eyes asunder,
 Just as tho’ some dreadful deed he’d done poor dear.
 Strolling in the green fields with my love,
 Happier far than stars that shine above ;
 Ne’er shall I forget that happy hour.
 When our troth was plighted in the ivy bower.

“(Dance.)

“One day later on we strolled again,
 Thro’ the same sweet fields of green,
 Tho’ happier than before
 To that dear old bower, and sing love’s strain,
 Dreaming of great happiness the more and more ;
 My ardent lover then, in tones so bold,
 Said he must kiss me—
 And for wealth untold,
 I could not prevent him,
 Cupid must have sent him,
 Tho’ I turned my head away, and said I’d scold.

Strolling in the green fields with my love,
 Happier far than any turtle dove ;
 Ne’er shall I forget that happy hour,
 When I answered ‘Yes, dear,’ in the ivy bower.

“(Dance till off.)”

A varied experience, and careful examination of lyrics submitted by aspiring song writers to the subject of these records, enables me to offer for serious con-

sideration the following rhymes, culled from Chevalier's curious collection :

Far	—	Mamma.	Cross	—	Horse.
Clothes	—	Nose.	Strength	—	Went.
Life	—	Pipe.	Wag	—	Sad.
Side	—	Outside.	Moon	—	Tomb.
Mistake	—	Kate.	More	—	Sure.
Time	—	Line.	Mizpah	—	* Whisper.
Mimic	—	Limit.	Haste	—	Space.
Easter	—	Esther.	Champion—		Vamping.

I trust that the young lady who wrote the following may have been successful in her quest for fame.

“ * * *

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I daresay you will be surprised to hear from a stranger, but I want to ask your advice about something. I have a very good voice, and I am very fond of singing and I should like to make singing my profession. I have a good share of pluck. The profession I am now following is Laziness. Now, what I want is this : could someone write and set to music a song for me ? I have a good high voice. I hope you can advise me in this matter. You see you are so popular and well known, you could introduce me to the pro-

* Pronounce Whiz *par*.

fession. I am good-looking and have a good figure—some of my friends say, why don't I go in for tight-dancing? You might try your best to help me. If you would like to see me, and give me personal advice, I could see you any time. So perhaps you will write and say if you could. Now I must ask your pardon for taking this liberty, and

“Remain,

“Yours hopeful for a favourable reply,

“ * * * *

“P.S.—This, of course, must be in confidence.”

A budding author sends this :—

“DEAR SIR,

“I have taken the liberty of offering you a song that I have put together. This is my first attempt at songs, but I have composed verses for patent medicines and soap advertisements. I have got a tune for the song, but I cannot write music, although I play the piano and banjo pretty well.

“Yours truly,

“ * * * ”

This from a racy young lady :—

“DEAR MR. CHEVALIER,

“Now, will you do me a great favour? Will you write me just a tiny little note and sign your name at the end of it? Please do! I’m a great admirer of yours, although when I’m in town, people never will take me to hear you sing. I suppose that when I get married I can go to the Pavilion as often as I like, can’t I? Well, I shall go at least once a week, I think. Is your name really Chevalier, or is that only your pseudonym? I’m not an autograph fiend—only I have a bet on this. Don’t make me lose it!

“Your expectantly,

“ * * * *

“P.S.—I hope you can read my rather illegible fist!”

Chevalier replied :

“DEAR MADAM,

“It affords me great pleasure to learn that the prospect of a visit to the London Music Halls is an incentive to matrimony.

“Yours,

“ALBERT CHEVALIER.”

When Chevalier was laid up with sore throat, all sorts of unfounded rumours were spread about. One was that he had cancer of the tongue. A Major-General in perfect sincerity, wrote : " Don't be frightened at the ugly name given to the sore by the doctors. When they can't cure they use ugly names.

" Avoid tobacco.

" If there is an offending tooth, have it extracted.

" Get homœopathic pilules of Nux Vomica, No. 3, and use them according to directions on the bottle."

Amongst other remedies suggested, was " Harrogate Toffee," a box of which was forwarded by a lady admirer !

Want of an organ in an East-end Church prompted the following :

(in red ink).

" Please read the Bishop's letter (enclosed).

" St. . . . Vicarage.

" DEAR SIR,

" Will you kindly send *One Shilling* (red ink) to help a very poor East London parish to get an *organ* for the Church. At present there is only a harmonium. The smallest sums help.

" Yours faithfully,

" * . . . * "

To which Chevalier replied :

“ Savage Club.

“ There are so many really deserving charitable institutions sorely in need of funds, that you must pardon me if I confess, that even the Bishop's letter (re Church organ) fails to stir in my breast one sympathetic chord. As a further proof of my sincerity, I may add that I am very fond of music.

“ Yours truly,

“ ALBERT CHEVALIER.”

Once more Chevalier's correspondent wrote :

“ St. . . . Vicarage.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have to thank you for your letter. When we next have a bazaar, the autograph of the composer of such a popular and charming song as ‘The Future Mrs. ‘Awkins,’ will, I have no doubt, fetch a high price.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ * * * * *

The comedian thereupon posted the following :

“ Savage Club.

“ * * *

“ The sale of a private letter is, so to speak, an addi-

tional length to the cloak of charity, which, I feel sure, will recommend itself to your good friend, the Bishop.

"Yours sincerely,

"ALBERT CHEVALIER."

A gentleman, who was evidently not aware of the tenacity with which actors stick to their old "props," made this request :

"London, N."

"DEAR SIR,

"You would be doing me a great favour if you would send me a suit of your coster clothes, which you have *done with*. I try to give an imitation (a very poor one I'm afraid) of your celebrated songs, in the drawing-rooms of my friends, just for the amusement of the thing. I would willingly pay carriage on anything you could send me, even it was only a hat like the one in which you sing 'Appy 'Ampstead,' or a wig as worn by the 'Old Dutch's' hubby. Send me anything you have done with, if you have anything.

"I am,

"My dear sir,

"Yours, most admirably,

" * * * * *

Chevalier replied :

“Savage Club.

“DEAR SIR,

“I have been accused of wearing my songs out. Need I remind you that my costumes are equally perishable? If you can imagine from this, their advanced stage of decay, you will appreciate my consideration in not complying with your request.

“Yours truly,

“ALBERT CHEVALIER.”

Possibly the following may be of interest as having suggested a line in one of Chevalier's songs :

“London, W.

“DEAR SIR,

“If you are in want of a dresser at any time I should be very glad if you would give me a trial, I am engaged during the day, but wish to find employment in the evening.

“I may say that I am twenty-six years of age, and a *gentleman by birth and education.*

“Yours faithfully,

“ * * * * *

A hotel porter wrote :

“ * * Hotel,
London, W.

“DEAR SIR,

“I hope you will excuse me taking the liberty of writing and asking you if you would be so kind as to get me on the Music Hall Stage. I have only just left the — Hussars. I was a trumpeter. I am now out of it, and I am a Porter in this Hotel, and I do not care for it. I should like to get on the stage, and I am sure you will help me, or at least, do your best. I am sure I will be very thankfully (*sic*) to you for your kindness. I must now conclude with best respects to you, hoping you will answer this letter at your earliest convenience.

“I remain yours

“ Most gratefully,

“ * * * * ”

At each of the four or five halls Chevalier visited nightly there was always a bundle of correspondence awaiting him. These, as a rule, he would put in his overcoat pocket to read on the way to his next turn. One evening, in the hurry of changing, he unfortunately mislaid several unopened letters. In the course of a few days he received the following :—

“London, N.W,

“DEAR SIR,

“In asking you to extend to me the trifling courtesy of a line of reply to my letter of — inst., I credited you with being a gentleman. This was an error, for which I beg you to accept my apologies. I now understand why you are so successful in portraying the Coster.

“Yours faithfully,

“ * * * * ”

The “Coster ” answered :—

“Green Room Club.

“DEAR SIR,

“I mislaid your *first* letter. I trust I have received your *last*.

“Yours truly,

“ALBERT CHEVALIER.”

II.

A SENSATIONAL TOUR.

In May, 1893, the following paragraph appeared in a Northampton paper :

“ I hear that Mr. Albert Chevalier, the famous singer of coster songs, is intending to pay a visit to Northampton shortly. He has a lively recollection of a former visit to the same town paid some years ago. He was announced to give a “ variety ” entertainment ; and what was his chagrin to find only two persons present—one who had paid his shilling, the other presented a piece of paper. He would like, he says, to meet his former audience, whom he regretted to have to dismiss, for he could give no entertainment that night.”

This was in reference to the dramatic and musical entertainment called “ Sock and Buskin ” already mentioned.

The wheel of fate spun round to Northampton once more, for this, as it happened, was the first town to be visited by Chevalier on the memorable tour of ten weeks which commenced on the 22nd May, 1893. Recollections of his last visit must have crowded into his mind

as, with his little company, comprising Miss Mary Glover, Mr. Bond Andrews, Mr. Sebastian King, Mr Charles Bertram, and the manager (his brother, Ingle) he arrived at Northampton on the day previous to his opening. Even the knowledge of his fame could scarcely have obliterated the fiasco of the past, when, on reaching the hall the next day an hour or so before the advertised time of opening, he found not a soul awaiting admission ; and the old hall-keeper in an easy, confidential way decided that there would be only a small attendance—he “had seen such shows before and they never went for much.”

The fact was, it being Whit-Monday the townspeople were mostly congregated in the public gardens at the time ; but soon the entrance to the hall was suddenly crowded by hundreds of people, and all doubt as to the ultimate success of the concert vanished. And such a success has been seldom, if ever, known in Northampton, the hall being filled to its utmost capacity with a delighted and enthusiastic audience. Chevalier sung all the best-known songs in his repertory, accompanied by Bond Andrews ; ballads and duetts being rendered by Sebastian King and Miss Mary Glover ; and the prince of prestidigitateurs, Charles Bertram, filling up the interval with a dexterous sleight-of-hand performance.

The initial recital was followed up by the most unexpected and phenomenal success in every town visited (some forty or more) during the ten weeks of the tour. Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Newcastle, in the north, vied with each other in giving the famous artist the most stirring welcome ; whilst, in the south, Ventnor, Southampton, and Brighton emulated the precedents of their sister towns. To give a detailed account of the extraordinary enthusiasm evoked by Chevalier's appearance at each town visited would be but a needless repetition ; but it may certainly be taken as conclusive, that seldom before have the provincial concert halls resounded so incessantly with the cheers that greeted the representative of the London "Variety Stage," and never before has any "variety" artist's personality been so productive of financial and artistic results.

[Chevalier has just asked me to impress upon our readers that the halls visited by him in the various towns, were not the variety theatres or music halls, but the *concert halls*—i.e., town halls, corn exchanges, public halls, assembly rooms, institutes, etc., where great artists like Sims Reeves and Patti have preceded him. The reason for mentioning this is that the audiences assembling in these buildings are quite different from those that regularly patronise the music

halls ; and their unqualified appreciation of the comedian's work shows how far-reaching and thorough is the art which can appeal alike to masses and classes with no uncertain voice.]

* * * * *

Since his Spring Tour, in 1893, Chevalier has thrice invaded the provinces, visiting the principal towns in England and Scotland, and journeying also to Dublin and Cork. As I write, he is preparing for a fifth tour, and contemplating a voyage to America.

I have before me numerous appreciative letters, which he has received from enthusiastic admirers all over the country. Upon one occasion a gentleman in Edinburgh composed the following verses, and presented them to Chevalier.

I.

“ Nae high-flown words pervade your sangs ;
Nae flooery language ripples through them,
But tae them a' a spell belongs
That maks your ilka hearer lo'e them.
Your voice alike can soothe an' cheer,
Your far-kent skill unfailin' bringin'
Ae time a smile, the neist a tear,
Sae great the airt that tends your singin' !

II.

“ I’ll ne’er forget the joy I gat
As yesternicht I sat an’ listened ;
Alternate cam’ the lichtsme smile,
Syne in my ee the tear-drap glistened.
Ae meenit thro’ my bein’ sped
A thrill o’ joy that made me cheerie ;
The neist my short-lived mirth had fled,
An’ deep within, my heart was eerie.

III.

“ Lang may this magic power be thine ;
This skill that brings your ilka hearer
In closer ken wi’ puir mankind,
An’ tae his fellow creatures nearer.
An’ may the Heaven abune be kind,
An’ let nae mortal ill ensnare ye,
But keep your voice, an’ heart, an’ mind,
An’ tae a lang, bricht future spare ye !”

To produce here the mass of letters received would be impossible. The clergy in particular paid the artist many generous tributes (a letter from the Rev. T. M. Lund, of Liverpool, is printed herein elsewhere,) and on all hands spontaneous appreciations were forthcoming, for which the hard-working singer was grateful. He especially values the following letter from Mr. Toole, who happened to be in Ilfracombe, at the time of Chevalier’s visit.

“ Valley of Rock’s Hotel,

“ Lynton,

“ North Devon,

“ August 18th, 1894.

“ DEAR CHEVALIER,

“ Just a line to tell you how delighted I was with your entertainment on Thursday Eve, at Ilfracombe. You were in splendid form. All your songs I’m sure gave the greatest pleasure to the packed and enthusiastic audience. Your admirable acting and tenderness in the songs of ‘The Tick-tock Clock,’ and ‘My Old Dutch,’ moved me very much, and the genuine wholesome fun of your other songs was capital. I hope that for many years you may continue to delight your thousands of admirers.

“ With kind regards and all good wishes,

“ I am,

“ Yours very faithfully,

“ J. L. TOOLE.”

Mr. Robert Buchanan’s testimony is contained in another chapter.

A beautiful picture which had been exhibited at the Institute of Painters, in Oil Colours Piccadilly, in 1891, was presented to Chevalier, at Edinburgh, “as a mark

of admiration" and esteem, by its artist, Mr. John P. Nicholson.

There was something of grim humour in the offer of a well-known zoologist, who wished to present Chevalier with a tame python, or a boa-constrictor, "in good feeding condition." Chevalier reluctantly felt himself obliged to decline the proffered gift, whereupon his admirer, with true enthusiasm, forwarded the skin of a reptile for him to hang up as an ornament.

Amongst other incidents of these tours, Chevalier relates the following story of a bargain :

"As I was walking through a side street in one of the towns I visited on my last tour, I saw, in a second-hand furniture shop, what looked to be some really good old silver dishes. I went in and asked the price. The proprietor named a figure which struck me as being rather more than the articles were worth, and I made him what I considered a fair offer. I didn't imagine that he had recognised me. He seemed absorbed in the contemplation of his wares, and greatly incensed at what he was pleased to call 'my desire that he should *give* the things away.' After haggling for some considerable time, and realising that I had made my final bid, he said, 'Is that the most you'll give? *Can't* you make it a bit more?' Here he looked up at me, with

an ominous twinkle in his eye. I was about to beat a retreat, when he called his wife out of the back parlour, and whispered something in her ear. 'Will you accept my offer?' I asked. 'Yes,' said he, and the twinkle in his eyes became more fiendishly obvious, 'I'll accept, *if you'll throw in an order for me and the Old Dutch!*'"

The opportunity of bargaining in the following instance was not forthcoming; it was a dead "sell." Chevalier, continuing his recital, said:

"I have only sung into a phonograph once—at Edison House, Charing Cross—I was therefore a bit startled when, in the town of New Brighton, I saw a notice in a window that a phonograph was on exhibition, and that a genuine reproduction of 'Wot Cher!' in *my own voice*, was to be heard inside. Thinking that some clever mimic had probably indulged his fancy by imitating me, I stepped in, paid the small fee, and, adjusting the tubes in my ears, listened.

"I heard the familiar tune, and the equally familiar words, but I must confess to a feeling of chagrin at the deception of the instrument which boldly reproduced what was supposed to be my own tones *in a broad Lancashire dialect!*"

The next incident is even less complimentary, but

Chevalier assures me that he was not in the least angry when it was related to him.

It was at the Town Hall, Streatham. One of the audience, a lady, rose from her seat in the early part of the evening, whilst Chevalier was rendering "'Appy 'Ampstead" in his very best costerese, and proceeded to the door. An attendant proffering her a pass-out check respectfully asked if she intended to return. The lady gave him a withering look as she replied, "No indeed!"—then tossing up her head and passing indignantly from the hall, she was heard to exclaim, 'Humph!—and they call *this* an English gentleman!"

III.

EN DESHABILLE.—A HOME-STUDY IN AUTUMN.

[*Isleworth—Mid-August, 1893.*]

There are songs in the air this morning—songs of bird and breeze ; and from a clear sky the splendid sun pours down its rays like golden rain upon trees, and flowers, and lawns. I can hear the gardener's whistle from among the fruit trees in the adjoining orchard, and across there in the meadow, happy birds dance through the green grass, or sweep over the gleaming trees high up in the sun's track. "Bob," the terrier, lies lazily at my feet, all his energy having failed him in the hot light of the August day. For myself, I have chosen a spot under a "greenwood tree," there to continue my share of an opera-libretto in which Chevalier and I are collaborateurs.

Presently there is a footfall on the gravel path, and " 'Arriett's " love-lorn hero appears. He has doffed the

buttoned and velveteed costume so familiar to his admirers ; the dapper appearance of the club-man has disappeared, and Chevalier in a totally different phase of character stands before me. A straw hat, worn slightly on one side of his head ; a low, loose-collared shirt ; short, light jacket ; striped flannels, and goloshes complete his attire. With his pipe in full blast, he comes up to my chair, remarking, jocularly :

“ The goodness of the morn upon ye.”

I return his salutation, and selecting a few sheets of paper and a pen he sits close at hand, and we discuss the plot of the opera.

Somehow, there is always a charm about writing in the open air, more so than invests work done in a close room. I always imagine, that indoors thought struggles for scope ; out here, in the open, it expands in the greater expanse, and has a fuller, quicker-pulsing life.

[*En passant*—the foregoing remarks apply to fine weather only ; at other times, fire and shelter are not disdained !]

Edward Jones, the well-known musician, has just arrived. He is composing music for the drama, and Chevalier reads him the first act which is now roughly completed. I sit silently watching the various expres-

sions of the reader's face, as he almost *acts* the piece. He is so earnest about it all, and not a point is missed.

This ended, cricket is suggested, and one or two other "boys" having dropt in, the paddock is invaded, and stumps are pitched.

I leave them for a while to look up a book on Persia—the scene of the opera. Among Chevalier's books are "Josephus"; "The Rosicrucians," [perhaps Harry Nicholls will recollect my inflicting upon him several chapters of this work at the Old Ship, Brighton, in March, 1893. By the way, I think the ever-young vocalist, Herbert Campbell, was there also]—De Quincey's "Confessions"; Buchanan's poems; Lytton; Corelli; "Origin of Religion"; Pinero's Plays; a score or more of poets; many books of theatrical history and biography; The Koran; French novels in abundance; but not one about Persia. Oh! well, Tom Moore, in "Lalla Rookh" wrote glowing [and it seems singularly correct] descriptions of scenery that he never had set eyes on; and we must try to——

Stay; here is an "Arabian Nights!"

Sufficit.

IV.

A SUNDAY AT ISLEWORTH.

The elegant drawing-room in the house at Isleworth is full of light and music on Sunday evenings, when Chevalier, after the labours of the week, is at home to his friends. The pretty Salviati candelabra glitter with prised light at one end of the room, whilst at the other end a bronze lamp of Arabesque design affords a small, pale glow like a mystery-fire. The arrangement of light is peculiar, some would call it daring, but there is a strange charm in this solitary spark at the dim end of the room looking across at the gleaming candelabra.

The drawing-room is some forty feet long, and contains a number of pictures, many from the pencil of Anthony Henley, a personal friend of Chevalier, and brother to W. E. Henley, the well-known poet and litterateur, and E. J. Henley, some years back a promising London actor. Chevalier has a great admiration

for the dreamy and poetic productions of this artist, which, executed both in oils and in black and white, are here very much in evidence.

Pictures of Edwin Booth, Madame Ristori, Lawrence Barrett, Terriss, John McCullough, and several other celebrities find places here, and above the grand piano is a painting by Mendoza—a nude female figure—which has been much admired and criticised.

A very fine bronze lamp, over six feet high from the floor, stands at the further end of the room. It is, I believe, of Indian design ; being ornamented by mythical monsters and surmounted by an armed figure bearing on its shoulders the circular reservoir of the lamp. Various other lamps on long brass pedestals are distributed about, the shade on one of them being composed of feathers, and very pretty and unique it is.

Distributed about the room are several beautiful palms, and through them one catches a glimpse of the large and splendid photograph of Chevalier singing "My Old Dutch," an exceedingly artistic work by his brother Bertram, who, by the way, takes all Chevalier's portraits and has the sole copyright invested in him.

Adorning the elegant white mantel-pieces, whose mirrors reflect the pervading light and colour, are quaint vases and bric-a-brac, with here and there a portrait

of one or other of the comedian's friends. The floor has a covering of bluish-green felt, and several beautiful rugs are placed about in different parts of the room, the windows in which are hung with heavy plush curtains.

In the adjoining dining-room there are other pictures by Henley—but the principal object of interest is Professor Hubert Herkomer's portrait of E. J. Odell—the well-known actor. This picture was raffled for at the Savage Club, the fee being a guinea, and it was won by Chevalier.

One of the most interesting gatherings I have known here was upon one Sunday evening last year, when Mr. Carl Armbruster, the well-known musician, honored us with a musical-lecture on Wagner's "Parsifal." He worked very hard and very successfully both as vocalist, lecturer, and instrumentalist, and those present appreciated his efforts.

Occasionally one or two of Chevalier's brother artists turn up—Harry Randall, G. W. Hunter, Frank Celli, "Dutch" Daly and others. Then again, his chum, Mackintosh, or R. W. Reynolds, Cecil Thornbury, Wilton Heriot, Lestocq, Charles Bertram, Harry Eversfield, Richard Blunt or Charles Groves; and F. Louis Schneider, Alfred H. West, or Bond Andrews, may

put in an appearance ; in fact, hardly a Sunday passes without its gathering, and it is then that Chevalier seizes the opportunity of trying new songs, as in scarcely any of the variety theatres can an artist thus prepare himself to meet the public.

On these occasions also, the comedian's mother [an authoress herself] and his sister, Adèle, invariably visit him. There is a domestic charm about these réunions, that parade and ostentation cannot offer. No one feels strange or out of place—there are no rivalries, consequently no jealousies, to mar the harmony of things.

And then—Bertram having prestidigitated as only he can ; and West, Andrews, and Schneider having exhausted Bach, Liszt, and Chopin (not to mention their own compositions); and Ingle having accompanied his brother Albert in his latest song—supper is announced, after which the party gradually dissolves until the bachelor-trinity—Chevalier, Ingle, and I, alone remain. Seeing that we are not yet in a retiring mood ; Ingle leaves us with our pipes and thoughts and makes tracks for bed.

We talk—a problem of religion *will* creep into the conversation—[How our unsatisfied natures always batter at these unsolved mysteries with strong earnest

cries that so often are hurled back at us in broken echoes !]—and we do not notice the passing of time, until with tired eyes we see advancing lines of dawn ; and discovering that another day is here, paradoxically say “ *Good night.*”

[A note in passing.—Since the foregoing lines were written, Albert Chevalier has taken to wife Florence, daughter of the late famous comic singer, George Leybourne, whose name only a very few years ago was a household word in amusement circles. A sweet singer herself, may she make her husband’s life a song, finding in him all which we men have found : a superfine and energetic intellect ; a trusting and loveable disposition ; and a human and humanizing sympathy : all elements of real manhood !]

A Chapter of Anecdotes.

A Chapter of Anecdotes.

I.

"A HOLIDAY SMOKE-ROOM."

[NOTE.—The following collection of anecdotes, personal and otherwise, were written by Chevalier long after the body of this work was completed in manuscript. In fact, the first proofs had already been corrected, and the book was nearing publication, when a spirit of retrospection moved the comedian, and one day, to my astonishment, he bore down upon me with a batch of incidents which he had taxed his memory to produce. This caused me a little anxiety, as Chevalier had written them just as he remembered them, and without any consideration as to which portion of the book they were to be assigned. However, they have

been dropped in here as odd fragments, which may afford some interest to our readers.]

Chevalier tells me he spent a most enjoyable evening in the smoke-room of an Ilfracombe hotel with J. L. Toole and Joseph Hatton, the well-known author. It was during the last autumn tour, and it is thus recorded by Mr. Hatton himself, in *The People*, of September 2nd, 1894.

“And we drunk the health of the local interpreter of the domestic virtues, and found fresh axioms to match ‘Honesty is the best policy’; ‘Be virtuous, and you’ll be happy’; and so on, with encouraging illustrations, showing that the strength of a nation in peace and war, is in proportion to its regard for the honour of its women, and the morality of its men. As the prophets declare that sooner or later we shall be involved in a war in which France will not be our ally, perhaps it is just as well to take to heart the lessons of history.

“So we went to Albert Chevalier’s entertainment, and the smoke-room of the Ilfracombe hotel occupied itself that night with the expositions of stage ethics, and the responsibility of authorship. Salt with Atlantic

breezes, and clean with the newness of a modern sea-side resort, it was just the atmosphere for a unanimous vote in favour of 'My old Dutch' and 'Tick-Tock.' Even the 'Pink 'un' was captured with the respectability of the idea of a moral music hall, and our new-found friend, who turned out to be an army officer, was in touch with Toole in ranking Chevalier's work with certain of Robson's characterisations, while Toole himself was willing to shake hands on the comparison of certain of Chevalier's vocal scenes with 'Dearer than Life,' and 'Dot.'

"We came to the conclusion that the London music halls had missed a great opportunity in not taking their cue from Chevalier, and that the provinces were getting the benefit of his retirement—only temporary it is hoped—from the music-hall stage. The hall where he sung at Ilfracombe was crowded, the enthusiasm remarkable, and this was only a repetition of the actor-vocalist's general experience since he started on tour in the provinces.

"It was pleasant — one of the guests said, 'historical'—to see Toole and Chevalier engrossed in each other's conversation, and to listen to the popular comedian encouraging the younger artist to keep to his *rôle* of serio-comic ballads, not only for Art's sake,

but in the interest of clean and wholesome amusement for the people."

[Pipes are lit in the den at Isleworth, Chevalier is in a talking mood, and thus I am enabled to submit a number of stories for our readers' amusement.]

II.

VANDALISM.

“I have met a number of curious characters, but the quaintest was an old man I used to know, who had a mania for collecting. He would add anything to his collection if it could be bought cheaply. His house was a perfect museum of unconsidered and other trifles, old boots, pictures, surgical instruments, second-hand clothes, etc. Even candle ends were not despised. These had a special box devoted to their accommodation, and were bought from a rag and bone dealer who assured my eccentric friend they had all been partially consumed in the presence of Royalty ! Though ostensibly buying with no ulterior motive, I am sure at the time of purchasing he dreamed of re-selling at a fancy price. As he very seldom sold, and as he was always buying, his stock increased to an alarming extent. I have seen him in a first-class railway carriage, taking home a dirty second-hand fish-kettle—a bargain, of

course! Painting in oil-colours was his hobby; I liked the old chap—he was such a character—and so I often looked him up for a chat. One night I called and found him attired in a smoking jacket, decorated by himself with odd samples from a drawer full of no-two-alike-buttons. The remainder of his costume was fairly ordinary, but with an eye to contrast, his feet were encased in a pair of Chinese shoes.

“I forgot to mention that he invariably cut his own hair. There was no necessity for him to volunteer the information (which to me he did), that no other coiffeur could have produced quite the same effect.

“He left the room for a minute and I heard him call to his wife downstairs, ‘Is tea ready?’ ‘Yes, I’m just having mine,’ was the reply, ‘Send up a cup,’ said he, ‘and don’t drink all the strong!’ Re-entering the room he proceeded to clean, with bread-crumbs, a remarkably clever rough water-colour sketch, signed by Rosa Bonheur—which signature he assured me was genuine. I called again, a few days after, and in the course of conversation, referred to his recent purchase. He at once produced a highly coloured oil painting, in a very magnificent gilt-frame. Recognising the *subject* with some difficulty, I remarked, ‘You’ve made a copy of Rosa Bonheur’s sketch, eh?’

“‘Copy!’ said he, contemptuously, ‘bless your heart, no! That’s the original picture. It was very rough when I bought it. *I’ve finished it!*’

“He had!”

III.

ON DRESSERS.

"I remember an old dresser, who had been attached to the theatre for a very long time. When I met him he must have been nearly seventy. His face was a perfect map of lines, and his hair as white as snow. He went on as a servant in the piece we were playing. I passed his room one night and found him busily engaged putting on a wig, and painting his face. I asked him why he did it? He replied, 'The part I play is supposed to be that of a man well on in years. *I'm making up for it.*'

"Another dresser gave me the following invaluable recipe for removing grease spots. 'Rub the place well with *Raw Harmonium.*' This same fellow regularly attended Divine Service at Westminster—or, as he called it Westminster Abbey. One night he startled the dressing-room by describing how beautifully a certain clergyman had read the first *colic* of the Communion Service!"

IV.

"One touch"

Shakespeare.

"I had, and still have, a great respect for Mr. —, the celebrated dramatic author. At the time of which I am writing, severe, and perhaps not always fair, criticism had made him somewhat cynical. I was engaged to appear in a new piece of his—one of the cleverest he had ever written. One day, after rehearsal, as we were travelling home together in the train, I happened to suggest that 'so-and-so,' mentioning one of the actors engaged for the production, would make a hit. 'Oh, yes!' he replied, 'he's excellent!—*by accident!*' On the first night, when the curtain fell, there was no question as to the success of his play—the applause was deafening—the house resounded with calls for 'Author.' Pretending not to have heard, he walked to the prompt entrance, and looked enquiringly at the stage manager, who excitedly implored him to 'go on

and bow.' 'Are they calling for me?' he asked, affecting surprise—then he casually sauntered on, bowed, came off, and very leisurely strolled into an adjacent *empty* room, forgetting to shut the door. On my way upstairs, I had to pass this particular room, and was privileged to discover that even the greatest are not impervious to praise. I had the pleasure of seeing my imperturbable friend give vent to his feelings in a series of capers, which would have taxed the powers of a professional contortionist. There was a loss of dignity, perhaps—but I liked him all the better!"

V.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

“Have you ever noticed that no matter how excited an audience may be during an acrobatic show, or the solo of a premiere danseuse, the enthusiasm afterwards is seldom uproarious? A man may be a good artist, but not a *showman*. An indifferent performer, with the latter attribute, will frequently score, where an artist, relying solely on his *art*, will fail. Every successful artist must have a bit of the showman in him, to ensure the food on which we are told he thrives, viz., applause.

“There were some very clever acrobats engaged at a music hall where I was appearing. After each ‘act’ they bowed, retired, and then returned to do a ‘bit more.’ The fact that each succeeding trick was better than the last, did not overcome the feeling of irritation, natural to an audience, left in doubt, as to when they

were really going to finish. In theatrical parlance, when they positively quitted the stage—‘there wasn’t a hand.’ Immediately they were off, the number indicating the next turn (a great favourite) was exhibited. At once there was a big round of applause. On dashed the acrobats, bowing and kissing their hands in acknowledgement of what they imagined to be *their* call !”

VI.

A FRENCH LESSON.

"Some years ago I knew a semi-professional comic-singer, who attended local smoking concerts. His repertoire consisted of all the most popular music-hall songs of the day. He was so successful that he determined to try his luck with some original ditties which he bought from one of the many scribes (in the S.W. district) who supply (see advertisement) 'Songs written on any subject. Music composed, band parts arranged, success guaranteed. Price 5s.' He speculated a sovereign, and in exchange received four compositions, with the assurance, that each was 'bound to knock 'em *if properly worked.*' In one of these, he had to impersonate a Frenchman. In the course of some interpolated patter, the word 'chapeau' occurred. My friend who was the cockniest of cockneys, consulted me as to the proper pronunciation. 'Look 'ere, old

man,' he said, 'I'm supposed ter go to a theayter. They rushes me in the cloak room for my coat, my umbreller, an' my 'at. I can get along orl right with the fust two, 'Mong abbee, mong ombrellar; but it's the word 'Sharrpo' as queers my pitch. Try 'chapeau,' I suggested, endeavouring to give him the correct accent. 'Eh? No!' said he, dubiously, 'it don't sound *furrin enough*.'"

VII.

TRANS-ATLANTIC.

"It is a common occurrence for a professional to visit America for about three months, and return to London with a dialect which would be a libel on the grossest caricature of a Yankee ever seen in the wildest of wild burlesques. One day, at a certain bar, very much frequented by professionals (it being in the vicinity of Agents' Land) a stranger walked in, hat very much on one side, check suit, overcoat with rabbit-skin trimmings thrown well open, so as not to conceal a massive cable-like watch chain of doubtful material. He looked round casually, and then in a loud voice, addressing no one in particular, said, in the aforementioned non-descript dialect :—'Wal ! I'm real glad to find some convivial society ! Ever been over to the other side ? No ! guess you'd better skip ! Make tracks for it right now. It's a grand place. Say ! I've been all round

next block to try an' meet a pal! Ef anyone would like a drink, I'll stand it *right here, naow.*' A brother pro ventured to accept the invitation, and asked if he, the stranger, had ever been to America. 'Wal! no,' was the reply, 'but *I've had an offer.*'"

VIII.

THE CENTRE OF THE STAGE.

“ I heard a good story about an actor. I will call him Brown—a great transpontine favourite, who sought fresh fields and pastures new in a West-end theatre. The night he parted from his old associates, a call was posted on the notice-board for the entire company to attend rehearsal the following morning. Next day the actors met, and forming a circle round the centre of the stage, they all knelt down and respectfully kissed the hallowed spot. *No one had ever been able to get near it during Brown's engagement !* ”

IX.

A NEW WAY TO EARN A LIVING.

"I remember a chorister applying for an engagement at the Strand Theatre. Edward Jones heard him sing—or, rather, attempt to sing. Not wishing to hurt his feelings, Jones kindly prevaricated, and told him that, 'there was no opening for him in the chorus.' The disappointed applicant turned on his heel, walked round to the Manager's Office, and demanded half-a-crown for '*having his voice tried.*' "

X.

THE "FIEND."

"There was once an agent, whom I will call the 'Fiend.' I will not otherwise disclose his identity, for the simple reason that it would be difficult to select, out of the entire London Dictionary, a name by which at some time or another, he had *not* been known. He was the worst type of a low, rascally middleman. Absolutely unscrupulous, suave when he liked, but the possessor of a foul, forcible, blasphemous, and extensive vocabulary. There are people who swear, and, somehow, it doesn't *sound* like swearing. He was not that kind of person. He had no respect for man, woman, or child, friend or foe, a disgrace to his calling, which, when *honestly* pursued, is a boon to the unbusinesslike professional. He was not without a certain sense of humour—like the individual—grim, cruel, and crafty. One day the manager of a small

hall called on him with a view to doing business. He was particularly anxious to secure the services of a performer, who had recently made a success in town. 'What salary would he want?' The 'Fiend' having previously induced the artist in question to sign a three-years' contract, at a comparatively small weekly remuneration, immediately named terms which would enable him (the 'Fiend') to reap a rich harvest. There was a lot of haggling, during which the 'vocabulary' was not spared. He had contrived to discover that the manager he was dealing with could neither read nor write. Taking a piece of paper out of his pocket, he handed it to him, saying, 'You don't think he's worth the money. *Read that.* It's an offer of an engagement, *at a bigger salary*, from a rival establishment. If you don't agree, I have no alternative, but to book him there!' The unfortunate manager, driven in a corner, not having the moral courage to acknowledge his ignorance, pretended to make a minute inspection of the document, and exclaimed, 'Well—of course—if it's good enough for *him* at *such a price*, it's good enough for *me* at *less*. I'll book him.' The 'document' he had so carefully 'perused' was the 'Fiend's' tailor's bill, need I say unpaid!"

XI.

"INVOLVED."

"Chatting with a certain clever dramatist, who had not been too leniently treated by the Press—and who was, consequently, very down on critics—he said :

" ' Walking to the theatre on the night my new play was to be produced, I saw a man, in evening dress, staggering along, evidently much the worse for liquor. A crowd of small boys had just commenced a little chaff. I drove them away, and offered him my assistance. He hiccoughed his thanks and enquired his way to the theatre which I was making for. With some difficulty, I led him to the box-office, where, clutching hold of an official, he asked to see the manager. At this moment, much to my surprise, the manager came up, and, with no little ceremony, personally escorted him to a private box. 'Who is that person?' I enquired. 'Mr. So-and-So, of the ——' (mentioning a newspaper), 'he's the dramatic critic,' was the reply. Next day I read his notice, from which I venture to quote the concluding tit-bit :

" ' There are good points in the play ; but the *plot* is *hopelessly involved*. ' "

XII.

A FALL IN THE SOCIAL SCALE.

"Edward Righton, the well-known actor, told me that one night he went to a music hall in the East-end of London, and was particularly struck with one of the performers, who gave a most realistic impersonation of a costermonger. On seeing how enthusiastically he applauded this 'turn,' a rough-looking man, smoking a clay-pipe, accosted him, and the following conversation ensued :

" 'E's varry good, ain't 'e ? ' "

" 'Capital,' said Righton.

" 'Just like 'em—ain't 'e ? ' "

" 'Exactly,' replied the comedian, with emphasis.

" 'Wonderful, ain't it ? ' "

" Righton agreed, saying it was, ' *Truly* wonderful.' "

" ' *Bally* wonderful, I calls it,' said the other, ' considerin' 'e *wos* a coster, 'fore 'e come dahn to this.' "

XIII.

A FRAGMENT.

"I once heard the following, sung in unison (or near it—occasionally) by a couple of ladies, described on the bill as 'Duettists and Dancers.' In justice to the poet, I prefer to think that the *tune* was composed first. As I cannot write music, I must ask the gentle reader to accept the nonsense words, in parenthesis, as indicating the interpolated dance.

" ' In the morning, when the sun shines,
(Tiddley um, tiddley um, tiddley um, ti tay),
'Tis then that everyone pines,
(Tiddley um, tiddley um, tiddley um, ti tay).

" ' (*Pause for attitude*)

" ' Then we'll stroll into the sweet and lonely meadow,
Where the nightingale is calling,
For on daisies of a bright and brilliant yellow,
The *Jew* is gently falling! ' "

XIV.

PRESENCE OF MIND (?).

"At the Theatre Royal, Brighton, I once played *Brown* in an old farce called 'Brown the Martyr.' In one scene, that of an artist's studio, I had to sit on a stove and pretend to be a lay figure, in order to overhear a conversation between Mrs. Brown and the artist. The lady and gentleman who impersonated these characters were amateurs. Finding the room cold, the artist is supposed to light the fire. This he did, and then the pair of them 'dried up.' I clowned, squirmed with simulated agony ; but my efforts were so violent, that the property stove, on which I was sitting, toppled over and rolled down the stage, stopping just in front of my two 'supporters,' who were vainly endeavouring to catch the prompter's eye. Jumping at the opportunity of doing something, the artist picked up the red-hot (?) stove and quietly replaced it, thus enabling me to continue my pantomimic protest against the warmth of my seating accommodation."

XV.

EXTEMPORE.

"A certain vocalist (invariably announced by the music-hall chairman as the 'great extempore' with the accent on the '*pore*') during his performance, proposed to make up a verse on any subject the audience might choose to give him. A wag in the stalls said 'hieroglyphics.' A little argument ensued, the performer trying to convince his audience that he had been asked to compose a verse on 'Gladstone.' It was no good—someone in stentorian tones again shouted 'hieroglyphics.' Unfortunately, the extempore genius did not know the meaning of the word. Seeing no way out of the difficulty, he dashed, haphazard at a verse, starting like this :

" 'The *Isle of Glyphics* as you know,
It is not far from here.' . . .

"The wag in the stalls took a back seat !

" The same performer on another occasion was asked to extemporise a verse on the word 'Hydrostatics.' Fixing his eye on the man who had so cruelly tried to upset him, he thus addressed the audience :

" 'Ladies and gentlemen, I must ask you to supply me with another word. In my songs I always make it a rule to avoid *Biblical subjects* !'

" Having sung a topical ditty called 'The year of '82,' and being asked to extemporise a few lines on the premature demise of a great popular favourite, whose name I disguise for obvious reasons, he sang as follows :

" 'A verse on Billy 'Opkins, who is dead I am quite sure,
'E used to sing upon the stage, an' likewise on the floor ;
'E always did 'is duty, that I vow is true—

" *Then pointing to the 'flies' by way of locating the celestial regions :*

" 'Let's 'ope 'e'll please as well *up there* in the year of '82 !'

XVI.

NOT BEFORE THE BOY!

"I once called on a friend of mine, a barrister. During my visit, a 'learned brother' looked in, and ignoring the presence of my friend's clerk—a lad of about eighteen—related an anecdote which he had heard in the smoke-room of his club the night before. It was—how shall I describe it? Well—it was not a drawing-room story; but he had come there to tell it, and he wasn't going to stop till he had finished. Then the clerk went out. My friend remonstrated: 'You shouldn't say those things before that boy.' Shortly after the 'boy' re-entered the room with a bundle of papers under his arm. Putting them on the table he said: 'I have been carefully through all of these, sir and made duplicate copies.' 'A new case?' I ventured to enquire. 'Yes,' was the reply. 'Big divorce suit. This is some of the evidence,' pointing to the bundle, which the guileless 'boy' had been all day copying!"

XVII.

A SELECTION BY THE BAND.

"One night, in a certain music hall where there was a notoriously bad orchestra, the manager suddenly appeared on the stage and apologised for the absence of Mr. —, a favourite comic singer, whose name was a great feature in the programme. The manager explained that he had every reason to believe that the artist would positively appear later on; and then, by way of throwing oil on the troubled waters, suggested, in order to avoid a wait, that the audience should be favoured with a little music. As he announced this, a pathetic voice in the gallery was heard: 'Oh! Mr. Manager! we *will* be good; but for Gawd's sake—*don't let the band play!*' "

XVIII.

ENCOURAGING.

"During my engagement at the old Court Theatre, a budding dramatist submitted to the late John Clayton a very, very bad play for perusal. Clayton read, and returned it, with the following characteristic letter :

' My dear sir,

' I have read your play—

' *Oh ! my dear Sir !*

' Yours truly,

' JOHN CLAYTON.'

XIX.

CONCERNING A HAT.

"I had just arrived at an hotel in a Midland town, and was busy writing some letters in my bedroom. There came a knock at the door. In walked a stranger with his hat on. 'Mr. Chevalier?' he asked. 'Yes—but——' 'Ah! I know what you're going to say; you remember my face quite well, but you can't think of my name.' I assured him it had not occurred to me to qualify my ignorance of his identity, even with that familiar excuse. 'Met you in ——' (mentioning a certain town) 'three years ago—smoking concert—you remember. Is that your tobacco?' (Here he examined my pouch.) 'Humph! too strong for me—I'll use my own. Know the boss?' I told him I had not that honour, at the same time registering a vow to make his acquaintance, and ask what he meant by allowing people to prowl about his hotel and walk into his cus-

tomers' private rooms. 'Good chap, the boss,' continued my strange visitor, 'all our "boys" stay here—Fred Wilkins and Tommy Binks won't go anywhere else,' (a statement which aroused no enthusiasm in me, as I had never even heard of the prejudiced couple.) 'Both taken seats for your show, to-night,' he went on; 'so have I—two five bobs, my boy! Heard you were upstairs—thought I'd come and see you. Glad you're stopping here. This place is just your sort—I know you like to be quiet.' I ventured to say that I was desirous of being so, as I had a few letters to write. 'All right, old man,' said he, 'see you presently.' Here he turned towards the door. Thinking to crush him with a little sarcasm, I said, 'By the bye, you've forgotten your hat.' 'Ha! ha!' I thought he would never stop laughing. 'Ho! ho! one of your jokes. I knew you'd say something funny before I left. Ha! ha!' Jamming the offending article over his ears, he went out, and I heard him saying to a friend whom he had left in the passage, 'I must tell Fred Wilkins that! That's *good*! Thought he could spoof me to look for my hat, *when I'd never taken it off*! Ha! ha!'"

XX.

CANDOUR.

"Some years ago, during the run of 'Aladdin' at the Strand, in which I introduced 'Our 'Armonic Club,' my songs were occasionally heard at smoking concerts, sung by amateurs. One night I ventured to sing 'Yuss, or the Coster's Courtship' at a little impromptu entertainment. When I had finished, a gentleman approached and asked me if I had ever heard Mr. ——— sing that song. His enthusiasm was so great that before I could reply, he added, 'What a rendering ! You should make a point of hearing him ! He *can* sing it ! He's great !' Don't think me rude, you're not in the same swim !'

"The artist alluded to was a total stranger to me, but I thought the opportunity too good to be missed,

so I humoured my candid friend, congratulated him on his perspicuity, told him the song was written specially for Mr. ———, in whom I recognised an extraordinary genius. After exhausting my stock of adulations, which I showered on my unknown rival, I wished my eccentric friend 'good-night,' and we parted.

"We did not meet again until the 'Coster's Serenade,' 'Wot Cher,' and 'The Future Mrs. 'Awkins,' were being whistled about the streets. I remember the occasion very well. I dropped into a theatrical club, as luck would have it, in the middle of another impromptu entertainment. I was asked to sing the above-mentioned songs. They went very well. A lot of my brother professionals came up and congratulated me. My eye suddenly fell upon the candid one! I knew him in a minute. I shook him cordially by the hand, but somehow he didn't seem quite happy.

"I didn't meet him after that until within a week or two of this book's appearance. He then, for the first time, alluded to the encouragement he had given me in days gone by. He was very nice about it. Indeed, I feel sure it had made a greater impression on him than it had on me. In the course of conversation he enquired how the book was getting

on. 'You must have had some odd experiences,' he said. 'Do you make notes?' 'No,' I replied, '*but I have a very retentive memory!*' He smiled, stood me a cigar, and wished the book success.

“In Front of the House.”

“In Front of the House.”

We are at Bletchley Junction—a half-hour's wait on our journey from Buckingham to Kettering. In the carriage, with a railway rug spread over their knees, Chevalier, Bertram, Bond Andrews, and Miss Belle Clancy, members of the Recital Company (Spring, 1895) are playing poker; and Ingle is relating to me many little incidents connected with his personal management of the Recital Tours.

“Easy as it may seem to the uninformed to conduct an entertainment with my brother's reputation to guarantee its success, there are many difficulties which present themselves, and which are by no means easily got over. As you have seen, he rents the concert halls, where large crowds assemble in such cases only as at large Subscription Concerts. These halls are nearly all of them very badly constituted and inconvenient for the admittance of crowds. There is either only one

entrance, or the place is surrounded by them. Ours is only a small party, consequently we do not carry a large staff—that which we have is augmented by two or three local policemen, who are often of no use whatever to me, except for the look of the thing. Then again, most of these places have no barriers to control the pressure, nor will the powers that be permit us to use one of our own, so that there have been several ugly rushes, and we are practically powerless to oppose and resist them. There have been instances where there was not even a pay-box, and we have had two or three hundred people clamouring and struggling round a small table at which a man was issuing tickets at the risk of losing table, tickets, money and all !

“Had there been barriers as in theatres and music halls, we could have passed people into the house in a much more safe and orderly manner.

“At Edinburgh, (visited during the Summer tour, 1894) there was a huge assembly outside the doors. All I could advance, and urge for the necessity of having barriers to check the rush that would follow the opening of the doors, proved unavailing ; and accordingly when the bolts of the main entrance were drawn back, the enormous crowd surged in and carried the police, hall officials, and me clean inside the concert-room ; and you

may imagine that it was no easy matter to set things right again.

“After the struggle was over, we found its evidences—crumpled and torn cuffs and collars, sleeve-links and studs, a piece of silk dress, and a portion of a gold chain. Very exciting indeed, and very unpleasant while it lasted. I’ve often wondered since what were the sensations experienced by one man in that wild rush, whom I particularly noticed was *blind!*”

“Our visit to Dublin last year* was rewarded with wonderful success. The company performed in the Leinster Hall for four nights, and above nineteen thousand people were admitted.

“At a certain hall, where we were booked, I ventured to give, as usual, my instructions to the police—where they were to station themselves, what to do, and so on, when they positively refused to render any assistance whatever, on the ground that they, according to their spokesman, were ‘professionals, *not menials!*’ Being of opinion that our own crowd was well enough supplied with professional talent, I engaged a few amateur gentlemen for the doors, and sent the constables away to console themselves with the excellent *esprit de corps* they had evinced.

*Autumn 1894.

"As you know, the management of these tours is entirely in my hands. The gentlemen who act as agents in the various towns are only required to sell tickets, and procure me a requisite number of check-takers and ushers. I do not in the least mind my share in the tour work being unrecognised, but it is somewhat amusing to find gentlemen in many instances advertising themselves by gratuitous paragraphs in their local papers as having, by their own energy and enterprise, brought Albert to their respective towns.

"Many people, not quite up to date, seem to have strange ideas of the nature of these recitals. An old lady at Dorking, entering an agent's shop to purchase a ticket, asked what hymns would be sung—and whether they were from Moody and Sankey's book!

"A youth in a Midland town asked one of my staff at the door whether the piece was 'a comic play or a *drayma*!'

"When we were crossing from Holyhead to Dublin, one of our party, in a spirit of waggery, entered my name as 'Sir Charles Ingle,' the result being that it was copied into the fashionable visitors' list at Dublin, and at the hall in the evening a card was brought to me. A gentleman wished to introduce his daughters to me. I blush to say I carried out the

deception, which was materially aided by the arrival of Bond Andrews, who without being aware of the position of affairs, happily remarked, in a jocular vein :

" ' Sir Charles,—Lady Ingle would like to see you.' "

" Andrews' reference to my wife as Lady Ingle completely dispelled any doubts my visitors might have had with regard to my title, and it passed as *bona fide*, but the haunting fear of untimely discovery made me vow never to pose as a knight again.

" At Sittingbourne, a rumour was current that my brother would not appear as advertised, and I was told that betting was freely indulged in. One man having laid five shillings to one against Albert's coming, was heard to remark as he left the hall after the show :

" ' Here's your money. I never lost five bob with more satisfaction !' "

" At one of the halls visited, I forget which, there was a crowd at the ticket-holders' entrance, and my brother on arriving had to force his way through, there being no other door except the ordinary one which was similarly besieged. The police had received orders to admit only those having tickets, and accordingly Albert was seized and his right of entry questioned.

" ' Have you got a ticket ?' asked the constable.

“ ‘Certainly not!’ my brother replied, apparently indignant.

“ ‘Then you can’t get in here,’ decided the constable.

“ ‘Oh,’ Albert smiled blandly, ‘but I always get in to Chevalier’s concerts.’

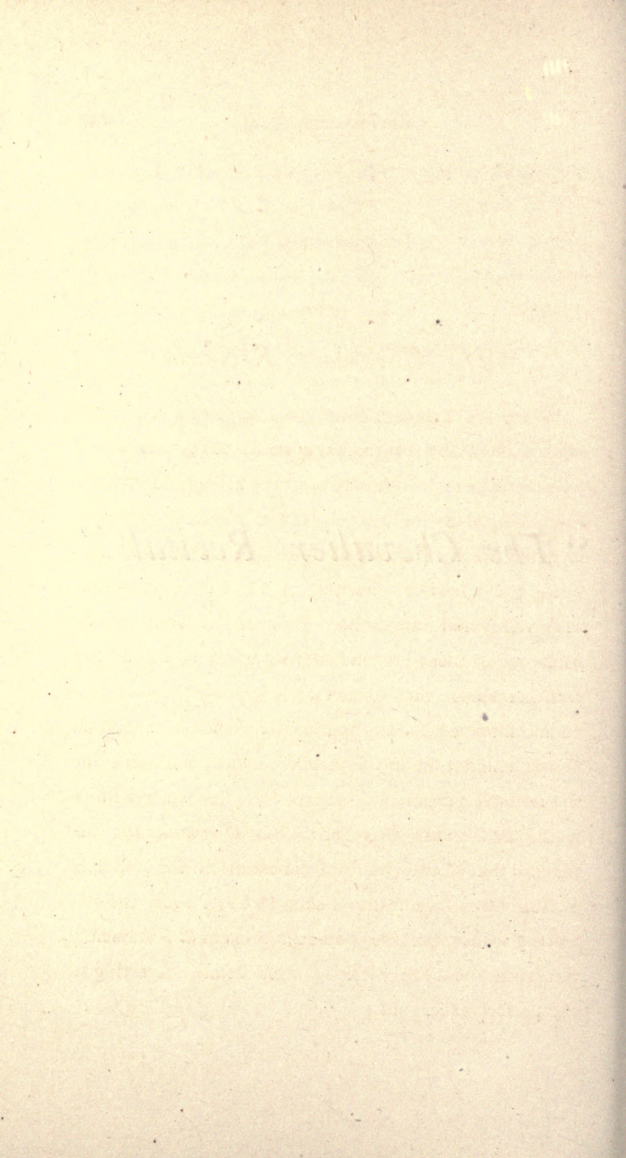
“ Here the policeman looked dangerous, and said, ‘I’ve seen the likes of you before, and’—

“ ‘And I always *get in for nothing!*’

Their eyes met ; the worthy peeler smiled, grinned, reddened, saluted, and my brother passed in to a cheering accompaniment from the crowd.

“ At Folkestone, a school of young ladies present at the Recital sent their birthday books to Albert during the performance, for him to enter his autograph in. At the close of the evening, they would not leave the hall until he had dressed and was making for his hotel. As he passed through the hall he was greeted by a clapping of hands, and acknowledged the pretty compliment in a few words.”

“The Chevalier Recitals.”



“The Chevalier Recitals.”

When the first announcement appeared that this book was in the Press, suggestions were made to me by several persons who always take a lively interest in everything that Chevalier does, that I should describe, in detail, for the interest of those that had never been present, a Chevalier Recital. I am well aware that very vague and hazy notions exist as to what constitutes one of these entertainments, and it is within my own knowledge that Chevalier is supposed by some to be accompanied by an understudy, who is turned on at convenience, or in the smaller towns; but why this should have pertained I cannot say, for such a fraud would be quickly exploded. Yet I can assure our readers that in the city of Rochester, during the last Spring Tour, I went into a shop to buy gloves, and the worthy tradesman (who had been present at my friend's Recital in the Town Hall the night before), referring to the performance, said :

"I enjoyed it immensely ; he's very clever, but what must *Chevalier himself be like !*"

Well, I was a bit disgusted at the man's ignorance ; and I quickly informed him that it *was* "*Chevalier himself*" whom he had seen ; but he did not seem to place much reliance upon my assertion, as he only shook his head, and, with a self-confident smile, said :

"*I know—he wouldn't leave London.*"

Unfortunately, I had paid for the gloves, or I should have tried another shop.

It is seven o'clock, and the doors of the Town Hall at Reading are about to be opened to the public. The platform, behind which is the organ, used for sacred concerts, is bright with the red and blue curtains which drape the "fit up" carried on the Recital Tours. These are festooned on either side of the proscenium opening, and stretch away up to the fine gallery, thus masking the regions "behind the scenes." There is nothing showy about the front, there are no decorations, the old-gold fringe on the curtains alone breaking the colour. The footlights are turned low, and the hissing noise behind explains that Sam Pennett, the carpenter, is getting his limes ready for use. Chevalier carries all the lighting apparatus for footlights, floats, and limes,

as well as the clock, cloth, and wings that make the set-scene for his "Tick-tock" song. On the platform at each side of the proscenium are two very fine blue and white vases, which have excited much admiration, and were made by Robinson, of Liverpool, in wood and *papier maché*.

Eight o'clock. The building is crowded in every part; boys are shouting their programmes, books of words, and souvenirs; these last being a neat collection of twelve engravings from Bertram Chevalier's photos of his brother Albert's various cockney characters. The lights are now full up, and the pale blue curtain is raised, to disclose the stage (draped with red hangings), and the Brinsmead Grand—to which Mr. Bond Andrews at once enters and opens the entertainment with his own fantasia on Chevalier's songs. This over, the pianist leads on Miss Belle Clancy, who renders Cowen's pretty song, "Love Lies Asleep," in artistic style.

Every item on the programme is numbered, and numbers to correspond are exhibited upon the stage. Up goes "No. 16."

Immediately the lights are lowered all over the house, and the stage is seen to be flooded with lime-

light. The opening strains of "The Future Mrs. 'Awkins" are heard, and with a quick movement, half run, half shuffle, Chevalier appears, and faces the music of a storm of applause.

The rest of the programme proceeds as follows :

" 'Appy 'Ampstead "	-	-	-	-	-	CHEVALIER.
Conjuring Entertainment	-	-	.	-	-	Mr. CHAS. BERTRAM.
" The Nipper's Lullaby "	-	-	-	-	-	{ CHEVALIER.
" Blue Ribbon Jane "	-	-	-	-	-	
Pianoforte Selection	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. BOND ANDREWS.
" Tick-tock "	-	-	-	-	-	{ CHEVALIER.
" Our Court Ball "	-	-	-	-	-	
Conjuring Entertainment	-	-	-	-	-	BERTRAM.
" My Old Dutch "	-	-	-	-	-	{ CHEVALIER.
" Our Bazaar "	-	-	-	-	-	
" Twickenham Ferry "	-	-	-	-	-	Miss CLANCY.
" Wot Cher ! "	-	-	-	-	-	CHEVALIER.

This programme is not always adhered to. Occasionally "Our Little Nipper," that fine song, "Wot's the good o' hany-fink?" and others in the comedian's repertoire will be substituted. But Chevalier always appears nine, or even ten times during the evening; precisely the same amount of work that he gets through in one night at four London Halls.

He claims that his is a *real* variety entertainment, in which are distributed humour and sentiment, comedy and pathos, first-class vocalism, and the best of music

that Chopin, Grieg, Liszt, Schumann, and other masters of song have furnished.

To-night, in this Town Hall at Reading, I notice particularly that there are several reverend gentlemen among the audience. Chevalier informs me that in each town he has visited, a contingent of the local clergy has always patronised his entertainment, and that in Liverpool, upon one occasion, there were present a number of priests of the Roman Church all seated together in one row.

Although mindful of the fact that he owes much to the London music halls, Chevalier feels himself much more at home in his recital entertainments. One reason is, that the surroundings of the latter admit of his doing work less limited in scope and importance than the conditions of a music hall "turn" will sanction. He has songs by him which could never be rendered with complete success, unless the man could settle down to his work with the assurance that no distracting element, such as the rush attending the journeyings to and from four or five halls nightly, would embarrass him. In many of the concert halls on tour Chevalier has found anything but helpful accessories—platforms in some places being constructed of tables, or of loose planks on tressels—dressing-room

convenience often meagre, seldom comfortable, and in some instances conspicuous by its absence. In the latter case the performers have had to dress in odd corners upon the stage, much to their discomfort. But compensation has been made by the splendid behaviour of the audiences in their unmistakeable desire to listen and to be interested and amused. This does not apply alone to purely provincial audiences, but to those also that have attended the recitals in the suburbs of Putney, Surbiton, Wimbledon, Stratford, Hounslow, Beckenham, etc. It may be thought invidious to draw comparisons between these and the London Variety Hall audiences, for as I have already said, Chevalier frankly admits his indebtedness to the latter—nevertheless, the fact remains that in the Variety Halls there is invariably a section of the audience that likes to amuse itself *as it likes*, and while I do not pretend to say how far this is justified, it must be considerably trying to a performer of grain and brain, who is doing his level best to earn his salary legitimately, and with the convictions of an artist.



CHEVALIER SINGING "OUR BAZAAR."

Political Parodies, Etc.

Political Parodies, Etc.

The collection of parodies, etc., which here follow should, perhaps, have formed part of the chapter headed "The appreciation "; but the truth is that the huge book of press cuttings in which the originals are pasted, was, by some unaccountable accident hidden away in a lumber room during the removal of Chevalier's books and papers to the new "den," which has lately been made to take the place of the old one at Isleworth ; consequently many things of interest have been overlooked until now, and thus they find a place here.

The following is from *Truth*, February 28th, 1892 :—

"HISTORICUS" A LA CHEVALIER.

Mr. J. Chamberlain, in his speech on Friday, said that his "Right honourable and gallant friend, the

member for Derby, had been making an attack on him in his very best and latest Whitechapel style."

A correspondent has attempted to suggest what Sir W. Harcourt's "very best and latest Whitechapel style" would probably be :

Yer knows that Josif Chamberlain,
Well, we was pals together,
But just at present, so to speak,
We ain't birds of a feather.
For Josif, e' 'ave turned his coat,
And don't seem very cheerful,
And when he gets the 'ump, you bet,
The way 'e talks is fearful.

CHORUS :

He *do* jist round on his old pals,
Which ezn't right now, ez it ?
It ain't exactly *wot* e' says,
It's the nasty way he sez it !

'E's all for dooks and toffs like them,
Their arms 'e offen clutches ;
And lor ! 'e is as proud as Punch,
Of notice from a Dutchess.
But 'tezn't that what riles me so—
No ! 'tez his nasty mutterin'
About that Grand Old Man of ourn,
As he were allus butterin'.

CHORUS :

His langwidge is disgraceful. Yuss,
It ezn't square, now, ez it ?
And even wuss than wot 'e sez,
Ez the nasty way 'e sez it ;

The Tories, though, will find as Joe's
A rummy pal to fix on,
For his new chums, it's ten to one,
'E'll play some dirty tricks on—
Why, even now to thank 'im much
They've not no bloomin' call for,
For it wur Josif, don't yer twig,
Faked up that Bill with Balfour.

CHORUS :

Yuss, now they're in a thunderin' mess,
And find that life's a "dezzit,"
They'll learn that 'tezn't wot 'e sez,
But the nasty way 'e sez it !

Apropos the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain and the
Caucus, *Punch*, of March 19th, 1892, wrote :

POPULAR SONGS RE-SUNG.

"Sich a nice man, too," is one of the earliest and
greatest successes of the Coster Laureate, Mr. Albert
Chevalier, who, "Funny without being Vulgar," proves
that he, the Muse of the Market Cart, and the Bard of
the Barrow, "Knocks 'em in the old Kent Road"—and

elsewhere—with well-deserved success. As is ever the case with the works of genuine genius, “liberal applications lie” in his “patter” songs, the enjoyment of which need by no means be confined to the coster and his chums. For example, at Caucus conferences and places where they sing—and shout—the following might be rendered with relish :

SICH A SMART MAN TOO!

(COSTER-JIM ON CORKUS-JOE.)

'There's party men yer meets about,
 What wins yer 'eart instanter ;
 Of *their* success there's ne'er a doubt,
 They romps in in a canter.
 There's one as means to lick the lot,
 Brum Joe, the artf'lest dodger,
 For 'im we Rads went 'ot and 'ot ;
 Sez we, “ Yuss, Joe's the codger ! ”

CHORUS:

Sich a smart man, too! Sich a *very* smart man!
 No Tory pride, no toffish affectation!
 Yet 'e somehow makes yer feel,
 That in 'im yer 'ave to deal
 With a gent, if not by birth, by edgercation!

'E made 'is pile in a snide way—
 “ Down on the nale ” 'is motter—
 Went to the front and came to stay,
 Whigs might persist and potter.

'Is game was doin' the poor good,
And doin' of it 'ansome,
Jack Cave, they called 'im—which was rude--
'Acos 'e talked o' ransom!

CHORUS:

Sich a smart man too, sich a *very* smart man,
No "Lily" pride, no "blue-blood" affectation,
Yet he somehow made yer feel
That in 'im yer 'ad to deal
With a gent by nature and by edgercation!

You ought to seen 'im on the stump,
Smart frock and stiff shirt collar;
Got up regardless, cleanest chump,
Orchid for button-'oler!
'E cocked a snook at pride o' race.
We shouted "Brayvo, Brummy!
Peg on, we'll put yer in fust place;
Then won't old Weg look rummy?"

CHORUS:

Sich a smart man too, sich a *very* smart man!
No Rip Van Winkle Harty affectation!
Yet 'e somehow made yer feel
That 'e jest knowed 'ow to deal
With the "gentleman" by birth and edgercation.

Acrost 'is phiz there stole a smile,
Like sunshine in November,
Sez 'e, "I'm for the sons o' Tile!"
O, yuss, don't we remember!

We fancied you was one of hus,
A cove we might ha' trusted,
Now you should 'ear the Corkus cuss
At the Brum bubble—busted!

CHORUS:

Sich a smart man too, sich a *very* smart man!
No orte scorn, no "arm-cheer" affectation!
One as somehow made yer feel
'E alone knowed 'ow to deal
With allotments, taxes, and free edgercation!

'E chose to play at hodd man hout,
'E ain't the fust by many
Wot's tried to Tommy Dodd the route
With a two-'eaded penny.
It's broke our trust ; 'e can go home,
With Toffdom for next neighbour,
'E won't cut capital's coxcomb
In the 'oly cause o' Labour.

CHORUS:

Sich a snide man too! such a *very* snide man!
And now—but that's 'is hartful affectation!—
'E would like to make us feel
As he only "plays genteel,"
To give Toffs a demmycratic hedgercation!

The accompanying sonnet appeared in a London paper ; it is written by M. A. Raffalovitch.

ALBERT CHEVALIER.

Rags, relics, love's old clothes, dead people's dreams,
Art ready-made, and artificial flowers,
Are good enough for most of us, it seems ;
We are not worthy of this world of ours,
We are not worthy of our matchless London ;
Our snobbishness of soul, our lack of training,
Our fears of being sneered at, have half undone
The beauty we should all behold disclaiming
What we are told of, for what is : come, then,
And learn of him to love and understand
Mirth, laughter, passion, love of modern men,
And more than third-rate Romeo's third-hand
Juliets, his coster pals, his coster girls—
His pearlies more than Cleopatra's pearls.

The fall of the great German, Bismarck, elicited the following from *Judy*, July 17th, 1892 :

(AIR—THE FUTURE MRS. 'AWKINS.)

Oh, I knows a youthful Kaiser! 'e's a fair surpriser:
'E actually ejected me.
At fust I said 'e shouldn't, then I says 'e couldn't,
Then 'e mutters, "Well, you'll see."
Says I, "Yer can't chuck Bismarck, the old orig'nal Bismarck,
Who's ruled the roast this many a year ;
Oh, do not trust Caprivi, nor go for to believe 'e
The bark of State can safely steer."

Oh, Kaiser ! sweet Kaiser !
If the country's ruined ye'll only 'ave yerself to
 blaine ;
D'ye 'ear ? Kaiser, dear Kaiser !
Don't yer think Caprivi is a third-rate naime ?

I remember our last meetin' : " Garn ! " was 'is greetin,
 " Jest yer mind what yer about."
'Is 'aughty head 'e throws up, turns 'is mighty nose up,
 Saying, " Now, dear Prince, get out."
" I like your style," says Kaiser, " I'll get a new ad-
 viser,"
Then e' shows me to the door ;
But some say Prince Von Bismarck, the old orig'nal Bis-
 marck
Will once again be Chancell—or.

Oh, Kaiser ! sweet Kaiser !
If the country's ruined, ye'll only 'ave yerself to
 blaine ;
D'ye 'ear ? Kaiser, dear Kaiser !
Don't yer think Von Bismarck is a fust-class naime ?

Truth, February 16th, 1893, contained the following
triumphal song supposed to express the feeling of the
Farringdon Road costers upon their victory over the
Holborn Board of Guardians.

WOT CHER! OR KNOCK'D 'EM IN THE FARRINGTON ROAD.

(WITH APOLOGIES TO MR. ALBERT CHEVALIER).

Oh—my! isn't this a purty go!
 Good—bye!—Taylor, Michael Angelo!
 Up—jumps—all us costers in a row
 Jest as they was sayin' we was floor'd.
 Yus!—we've—got some jolly news to tell,
 Right—from—Kentish Town to Camberwell:
 Ain't—it—jest a reg'lar nasty sell
 For that bloomin' 'Obun Districk Board!

“Wot—cher!” all the neighbours cried,
 “So, the Board you've beat, Bill,
 As druv you from the street, Bill.”
 Larf!—I thought I should 'ave died—
 Knock'd 'em in the Farringdon Road!

The—Beak—said as 'ow we 'ad no right,
 But—my—pals an' me kep' on the fight;
 Now—the—Judges they 'ave spoke out strite!
 Good old Lordy Col—er—ridge an' Kaive!
 So—let—Boards an' Westries all look out—
 For—we—ave our rights without a doubt,
 And—they—musn't chivvy us about,
 Not so long as we don't misbe—hive!

“What—cher!”—all the neighbours cried,
 “So you've got yer way, Bill!
 So you 've won the day, Bill!”
 Larf!—I—thought I should have died,
 Knock'd 'em in the Farringdon Road!

ACROSTIC.

BY EDGAR BATEMAN.

(To-day, Feb. 10th, 1894.)

An earnest actor with his art in touch,
Long may he give us *genre* quite old Dutch
Begone sore throats ! ye fogs and vapours flee !
East wind to him but little nippers be !
Retail us Mile End maxims, morals, modes,
Thou quaint Colossus of the Old Kent Rhodes !

Charm us with melodies which seem to say :
Hark, 'tis an harp from up Olympus way ;
Eschew aught "shallow," teach both gods and "stalls,"
Vivacious lion, Chingford bred, of halls !
Adored of 'Arriet, loved by 'Liza true,
Long may both think him such a nice man, too ;
In wondrous garb sing 'Appy 'Ampstead praise,
Entwine the paper wreath with poet's bays,
Reaching Parnassus by the "pearly" ways !

“An Old Year Out.”

“*An Old Year Out,*”

I.

MOONLIGHT MYSTERY.

Amongst a mass of press cuttings I have found one or two in which the truthfulness and reality of Chevalier's cockney impersonations are questioned; not in any unfriendly spirit, but as a natural result of the dethronement of the music-hall coster [without sense or sentiment, and vulgar in the extreme] who had been for years accepted as the true type of coster-cockneydom.

With due deference for the opinions of others, I submit that this accepted type was a libel on an interesting class. The art which elevates is surely heads above the artifice which depreciates; and Chevalier in humanizing a gross caricature and investing him with humour, sentiment, and pathos, gave us a man with a heart as susceptible and sensitive as most. It is all stuff and nonsense for the pessimists to say that his characters are but chimeras of a clever brain—they are

very real. They exist with the ideals of humanity strong in them, and it is this that Chevalier has worked so successfully to establish.

* * * * *

The subject of these records is away upon his third tour, and as I sit alone by the fire in the cosy dining-room, strange ghosts shape themselves from the flames. They are pleasant ghosts, these : 'Arriet's lorn lover ; 'Liza's happy swain ; the hilarious hero of the Old Kent Road ; Sal's forty-year companion ; they fill one with graces of memory, for there are few of us that have not loved. . . . The room is close and dim . . . There may be a greater life outside . . . I pull back the heavy plush curtains, and open the window . . .

Moonlight ! Far and away a spiritual beauty floods the night with the calm glow of a great peace. God's poetry everywhere !

And once more I return to the grumblers who take Chevalier to task.

* * * * *

This time it is for employing the aid of lime-light in his songs. It has been said that this beautiful adjunct was wholly unnecessary where such an artist was con-

cerned, and that he could portray his various characters as well without as with it.

But not a few of Chevalier's characters are ideals, remember ; and he uses the lime-light as an accessory *after* his conception. He did not compose his poems in or to it—nor did he take its white glory in a promethean sense, and from it evolve the forms of 'Arriet, 'Lizer 'Awkins, and that wonderful and lovable "Old Dutch." But having idealised his characters from their clay surroundings, he, recognising the beauty and power and mystery of light, proceeds to use it to heighten his ideals and to assist him in conveying to his audience that as light, on a point of beauty must always stand in preference to darkness, so does the idealised type of humanity which he presents show that all is not base in the least intellectual, but, that beneath the rough, uncultivated, and maybe even repulsive exterior, beats the mighty pulse of human love.

I cannot forget the wonderful effect created in the performance of "The Coster's Serenade." The stage became darkened as the symphony of the wild half-Irish, half-gipsy melody moaned from the orchestra. Then a stream of light came from the wings, and the next moment a pale, earnest face, with searching eyes came in view, and a hushed voice crooned to a

hushed house the love story of "a night in May":

"When that moon shall cease to shine,
False will be this 'eart o' mine—"

the voice uttered, with subdued passion. We all love this moonshine, and in the sweet mystery of it our hearts are awed with reverence for the spirit that moves us. And why not he? Why should not this dweller in a court down East, earning a hard, and often precarious, livelihood, live anew on a May night, and feel the influence of the calmness and the silence around him in the first supreme moment of his love?

Again, that halting, frowsy-haired old labourer, living over again his life's romance in that touching human song about his "pal." May we not suppose that the moon out yonder through the window has something to do with the awakening of old memories when he sings:

"— Many years now, old gal,
Since them young days o' courtin'."

Does it not complete the picture? He whispered long years ago those soul-utterances which sanctify love to the woman of his choice, and in moonlight walks lived in fancy those "forty years" of happiness which have since been realised.

A detail! I fancy I hear someone say. Well, details show the artist, lack of them—the jobber.

II.

"THE DOYEN OF BOHEMIANS."

Now, in the days when our comedian was a frequent visitor at the Savage Club, he was constantly to be seen in the company of Mr. E. J. Odell. Chevalier has often told me that Odell's striking personality attracted him greatly, and nothing pleased him more than a cigar and chat with the old actor who made, and, I believe, still makes this club his headquarters.

One evening—the six months' tour having ended—Chevalier was telling me a few anecdotes of Odell's peculiarities, and suggested that they should be included in these pages ; hence their appearance.

Dubbing him the "Doyen of Bohemians," he began :

"What an inexhaustible fund of humour, and what a remarkable personality ! It has been my privilege to have many delightful chats with him at various times. He always says the last thing you expect, and seldom fails to score. I remember a little impromptu concert

one night at the Savage Club. I had just finished my evening's work, and dropped in for some supper. I was introduced to an enthusiastic mimic, who was supposed to give a marvellous imitation of me. Could anyone play for him? If so, he would sing 'The future Mrs. 'Awkins.' I volunteered to accompany him on the piano, and he proceeded to impersonate me. To see and hear an imitation of yourself is like looking at your own photo. You are the worst judge of its merits—so I cannot express any opinion as to the truthfulness of this particular impersonation. I can, however, say that it was very kindly received by the majority of those present. Odell who had been concealed behind a newspaper during the performance, allowed the applause to subside, and then gave vent to the following criticism: 'I was at a smoking concert the other evening. Twelve gentlemen gave twelve imitations of Mr. Henry Irving (pause). They were all different (pause), *and they were all applauded!*'

"Talking of imitations, I remember one night, at the Bon Frères Club, someone suggesting that he would like to give an imitation of Odell. The original was present, and on being asked if he objected, replied, 'If the gentleman thinks he can do it, he may try.' The gentleman thought he could, and *did*. As on the occa-

sion before alluded to, Odell allowed the applause to subside, rose out of his seat, and, slightly altering the words of the Scots bard, addressed the audience as follows: 'Mr. President, gentlemen,—My old friend, Bobby Burns, has said, "Oh that God the giftie'd gie us, tae see ourselves as ithers see us." All I can say is—when it happens, *God help us!*'

"I remember meeting Odell, a few days after the production of 'Faust,' at the Lyceum. Someone asked him if he had seen it. He said, 'I wrote to Mr. Irving for two seats on the first night. He sent me two (pause) *for the Aquarium!*'"

"Professor Herkomer painted a striking likeness of Odell, which for some time was hung in the Savage Club. Subsequently it was 'raffled' for the old actor's benefit, and I was the fortunate winner. Meeting Odell after the event (and whilst a well-known painting by Rudolph Blind was on exhibition in the Strand), he said, 'Allow me to congratulate you upon being the lucky possessor of *The World's Desire!*'"

III.

ODDS AND ENDS.

At various times Chevalier has related many personal incidents which have befallen him in town and on tour. For instance, on the Spring Tour, 1894, he was performing at Birmingham, when a man stood up in the middle of the audience, and insisted upon handing him a five-pound note. Chevalier promptly decided to hand it over to a local charity, when the generous donor, with equal promptitude, doubled his subscription.

"As I drove up to the stage door of the Paragon, Mile End Road, on the night of my first appearance there," said Chevalier, "a crowd of youthful beady-eyed Israelites swarmed round the brougham, and, as I was getting out, I heard the following conversation between two of the youngsters :—

" 'That's 'im !' "

“ ‘Oo?’

“ ‘Im!’

“ ‘Im? ‘Oo’s ‘im?’

“ ‘Sandow!’ ”

“ I remember once, when I was very hard up, accepting an engagement to sing after dinner at the house of a wealthy City merchant. I arrived (with my brother Auguste, who was to play the piano for me) before the dinner was over. We were shown into a palatial apartment, and waited patiently for the audience to arrive from the dining-room. It arrived, but by instalments—the ladies, of course, first ; and, amongst them, the hostess, who had not sufficient common courtesy or good taste to recognise, by so much as a nod or a word, the presence of two total strangers. I wanted to walk out of the place there and then, but I was very hard up, and so I swallowed my pride—false or otherwise. Presently the gentlemen, having finished their cigars and liqueurs, joined the ladies in the drawing-room, and I was requested to ‘do something.’ I did everything I knew to try and rouse some little enthusiasm. I sang coster and other songs, I played, I recited, I gave scenes from plays—all to no purpose. In despair, I sang a French song. This was the only

item my audience applauded. Exhausted with one of the most trying ordeals I had ever experienced, I took my leave and my cheque, observing to the host that I regretted my efforts had been so unsuccessful. To my amazement, he expressed himself thoroughly satisfied with the entertainment I had provided, and informed me that 'his friends were all delighted, but few of them spoke English. They were nearly all Dutch Jews.'"

"In one of the many so-called theatrical and music-hall journals, which spring up from time to time, and which I will call the 'Mushroom,' a column was devoted to, 'What the Mushroom thinks.' Under this heading there appeared some very uncomplimentary remarks about me, which ran something like this:—

"*'What the Mushroom Thinks.'*

"*'That Albert Chevalier's new song is a failure.'*

"*'Old Dutch indeed! Cheese it!'* (An obvious joke!)

"*'We saw a turn at Marwood's the other night, which can give A. C. 50 in 100, and beat him easy.'*

"*'Take "Mush's" tip. Write songs; but get some one else to sing 'em!'*

"On the day of this particular issue, I happened to meet a 'Mushroom' tout, whose overtures *re* the in-

section of a professional card I had several times politely, but firmly, declined. 'Well,' said he, 'give us your opinion of "What the 'Mushroom' Thinks." 'This is my opinion,' I answered, 'that if I advertised in the "Mushroom," the "Mushroom" *wouldn't think!*'"

Of a hungry, but humorous, tramp, Chevalier relates the following :

"I had just done a good stroke of business—dissolved partnership, I think, and was feeling all the indescribable delight of having shaken off an incubus. It had cost a lot of hard-earned money; but I was young, and strange to say, philosophical enough to accept the inevitable. I had bought my experience at a long price, but it was not only a monetary sacrifice. I no longer believed in the old adage which says that the 'devil is not so black as he is painted.' I had been entertaining some old friends at dinner, and had made a great point of telling them that 'my faith in human nature was shaken'—'once bitten, twice shy,' etc., etc., all intended to prove that I was an altered man. I am not sure that I didn't say 'heart-hardened.' We were bidding one another good-bye, in the doorway of a West-end restaurant, sheltering from the rain

which was pouring down in torrents—when someone touched me on my shoulder and *coughed* rather than said, ‘Shall I fetch a cab, sir?’ I turned round and saw a poor wretch in drenched rags, his face pinched by hunger, and blue with cold, shivering at my side. He didn’t wait for a reply, but disappeared in the puddles, and came up a few minutes after with a cab. I jumped in, shouted my destination to the cabman, and mechanically put some coppers in the poor tramp’s hand. He looked up—‘Thankee, sir!’ he said, ‘*I’ll go and git my breakfast!*’ IT WAS EIGHT O’CLOCK AT NIGHT!”

“I was once engaged in a music hall where there was an objectionable official employed behind the stage, whose duty it was to put up the numbers, and do odd jobs, of a nature best described as vague and various. He had a weakness for fried fish, which he carried about in a piece of newspaper, and munched at intervals. He considered that long association with the hall in question entitled him to be on terms of intimacy with any artist engaged there. I remember a characteristic story about him, related to me by a brother actor, whom I will call John Smith. Smith determined to try his luck in the Variety

theatres, and obtained an engagement to appear at this particular establishment. One night he happened to be a trifle late. Ever to the fore, the 'odd jobber' addressed him as follows : 'Come on, Jack ! 'Urry up, old man ! I can't have this ! Get yer props aht—we're behind time, nah !' Smith finished his performance, and then ventured gently but firmly to remonstrate—'I'm not stuck up,' said he, "but I don't know you, and you don't know me—intimately. I wish you wouldn't call me by my Christian name, it sets such a bad example to the men.' Without turning a hair, the irrepressible one replied, 'Alright, guv'nor ! I understand. Before the men it's Mr. Smith, between us it's 'Bill' an' 'Jack.' *That* 'll be alright !'—and putting down the newspaper parcel containing his supper, he proceeded to welcome the next 'turn,' who suffered from corns, as 'Good 'eart an' bad feet !' "

"In one of the towns which I visited on my first recital tour, I arrived in the hall as the fit-up was being erected. In the centre of the auditorium I noticed a very dirty-looking loafer, standing with his hands in his pockets, and his legs wide apart. His hat was cocked on one side, and he was smoking a black cutty pipe. At first, thinking he was only indulging in a little harm-

less curiosity, I did not disturb him, but, as time went on, and he exhibited a decided inclination to become a fixture, I ventured to ask him what his business might be. 'Oi wants ter see Shevalleer,' he said. I told him that was my name—or something like it. He became friendly. Holding out a great greasy paw, he exclaimed, 'Put it there!' Surmising that this was an invitation to shake hands, I put it there—he was a powerful man—he held it till my knuckles ached. After this little formality, there was a pause. Knocking the ashes out of his pipe, he looked me fiercely in the face, and gave utterance to the following remarkable speech, 'Oi knows a chap i' town 'ere as sings your songs,' (Pause.) Then, as if an afterthought had struck him, he added, 'An' 'e sings 'em blanked well, too!' He didn't say another word. He walked out of the place, and I never saw him again."

"I recollect a performance of the 'Colleen Bawn,' in which I appeared as *Danny Mann*. Playgoers will remember, that in the cave scene, *Myles na Copaleen*, by means of a rope, swings from one rock to another, and ultimately saves the heroine by plunging into the water after her. Unfortunately, the actor who played *Myles* on this occasion had not properly rehearsed, and at

night, in attempting to reach the opposite rock, he misjudged the distance, and did not spring with sufficient impetus. The result was, that he was left swinging like a pendulum, in full view of the audience. Finding no other alternative *he dropped*, and you can imagine the howls which followed him, as he beat an ignominious retreat, wrapped up in the waves—represented by rows of green gauze—with which he had contrived to get entangled."

"I never told you about the stuttering baritone in Van Biene's Company, did I? It was his first engagement in opera. He could articulate quite distinctly when he sang, but in ordinary conversation the impediment in his speech was quite obvious. He was cast for a part in Beethoven's 'Fidelio'—all singing, with the exception of one line, *which he had to speak*. The music, difficult as it was to study, did not trouble him at all, but that one line *to be spoken* was his constant nightmare. There wasn't much of it, it was quite short. He had to ask, 'Where are the despatches?' but, 'despatches' was one of the words he could not say without stammering. I rather think he was playing *Pizzaro*, the period of the play somewhere about the time of our own Queen Elizabeth. At night he went on

and sang the music splendidly. The moment he had dreaded arrived. He made a desperate attempt to utter the word 'despatches,' but finding it impossible, regardless of period and costume, substituted the word 'telegrams.' Even the prima donna smiled—a fact worth recording, as it was the first time I had ever witnessed such condescension."

"Talking of people afflicted with an impediment in their speech—the following incident—impossible as it may seem—I can vouch for. It occurred at a *matinée* in a London music hall where I was engaged. I arrived earlier than usual, having forgotten to ask overnight what time I should be wanted. I found I was down to appear at four o'clock. It was about two then; so to pass the time away I went round to the front of the house, where I met two or three friends. I was chatting with them when a stranger came up, touched me on the shoulder, and exclaimed in a decided Whitechapel dialect, and with the most horrible lisp I have ever heard :—'Arralbert,' (Anglice : Ah! Albert. — Once adopt the music hall as a profession and the use of surnames becomes superfluous. To resent a total stranger's slapping you on the back and not using your surname—to say nothing of the polite prefix 'Mr.'—would be

to outrage an unwritten law, under which such conduct is described as 'putting the pot on.') 'Arralbert,' he repeated, 'Gled ter thee yer! Goin' on thith afternoon? Yuth? Oreright, I thall thtop an' 'ear yer! Wotcher goin' ter do, when yer've done?' I told him, when I finished my performance, it was my intention to go straight home. 'Come an' 'ave thum dinner alonger me.' I thanked him, and regretted that I could not accept his kind invitation. 'Well,' continued he, lisping worse than ever, 'if yer carn't—yer carn't! I tell yer wot! Come an' thpend Thunday wiv me! I've got a nithe ahse (house) dahn in the eatht end of London. We'll 'ave a 'igh old time! 'Ere 'th my card.' Here he fumbled in his pocket and presented me with a dirty scrap of paste-board bearing the following legend:

“MR. T—— X——,
“*Elocutionist.*” (!)

BOHEMIA.—THE BONS FRERES CLUB.

“What a delightful meeting! and how aptly Good Brothers describes its members. Lately I have been unable to attend as frequently as I used on account of being away so much on tour. ‘*Upper Bohemia*’ always appealed to me as an incongruous title—an

impossible paradox, until Ernest Renton, a bon frère, introduced me to this club, of which I am proud now to be an honorary member. Nowhere else have I ever seen, under one roof, such a galaxy of theatrical and musical artistes, whose delight it was to pop in and do something for the delectation of an audience, such as few performers are privileged to appeal to. 'Con Amore' is the prevailing sentiment. The 'Bon Frères' are staunch theatre goers. They 'plank' their money down on first nights, and if they're pleased they return again, and again. They are the first to subscribe in the cause of charity, for the profession they love so well. I recall one delightful evening when, among others, the following distinguished gentlemen were present—most of whom contributed to the smoking concert after dinner: Henry Irving, J. L. Toole, Wilson Barrett, Beerbohm Tree, Henry Neville, Fred Leslie, Arthur Roberts, Ben Davies, Charles Osborn, Eugene Stratton, Herr Hollman, Tivadar Nachez, Tito Mattei, John Crook, Cammeyer, John le Hay (with his inimitable ventriloquial entertainment), E. J. Odell, etc. Variety if you like! There's a programme for you!!"

PANTOMIME.

"However much opinions may differ as to the

advisability of reviving a taste for, and encouraging the 'noble' art, the now defunct 'Pelican' (ostensibly started for the above-mentioned purpose) was unique in Clubland. All sorts and conditions of men met there. Artists, musicians, members of the Stock Exchange, authors, merchants, actors, journalists, noble lords, M.P.'s, etc. I rather think the goody goody uninitiated—the purity paraders—imagined that the possession of a pair of six-ounce gloves, and an intimate acquaintance with 'Queensberry Rules,' were the only essential attributes for membership! Wrong again!—wrong, *as usual*!—Delightful little impromptu smoking concerts were among the many attractions.

"One night I was having some supper, after business, at the same table with Arthur Roberts, and two or three Frenchmen. 'L'Enfant Prodigue' was then running at the Prince of Wales's. The conversation turned on pantomimic action—the Frenchmen insisting that no Englishman could express his meaning in dumb show. Fired possibly by patriotism, Arthur Roberts flatly contradicted this sweeping assertion. He appealed to me, and I agreed with him, that pantomime was the foundation of all dramatic expression. At this moment, the late Alfred Cellier, who had been improvising at the piano, suddenly

played an old familiar ballad. Arthur Roberts jumped up, and to the intense delight of his English supporters, gave a pantomimic interpretation of the song Cellier was playing. Not a point was lost. When he had finished I heard one Frenchman (who had laughed as much as anyone during the performance) whisper deprecatingly to his friend: 'Very good, but' (with a shrug), '*very English!*' Of course it was! Better still, *it was perfect!*"

AT TERRY'S THEATRE.

By some unaccountable oversight I have forgotten to mention in the first part of these records that Chevalier was the original *Silas Hobbs* in Mrs. Hodgson Burnett's play, "The real little Lord Fauntleroy." Upon reminding me of this, Chevalier said:

"During the run of 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' at Terry's, one of the characters forgot his lines. As luck would have it, the prompter had lost his place in the MS. After the performance, the whole company welcomed him in the dressing-room with the following parody of Coborn's popular song, 'E's all right when yer know 'm, but yer've got to know 'im fust.'

'E's orl right as a prompter, if you're certain of the text;

'E never gives the word you want, but *p'raps* you get the next,

'E wouldn't 'elp Lord *Font-le-roy*, 'e'd leave the kid to bust!

'E's orl right as a prompter, *but you've got to prompt 'im fust.*

"This was the first and only time I had the honour of collaborating with the now celebrated author of 'Charley's Aunt.'"

PROVINCIAL.

Shortly after his appearance at the Pavilion, Chevalier accepted several engagements at provincial music halls. Cardiff, Newport, Manchester, Brighton, and Birmingham were the towns visited. In the first three mentioned, his reception was a very mixed one. He tells me he was frequently hissed. Since then, he has re-visited all these towns, on his various *Recital* tours with his own concert party, appearing in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, etc. Under these improved conditions, he has met with phenomenal success. On his second appearance in Manchester, the following paragraph concluded a long article in the *Umpire*:

"Yes, Mr. Chevalier, we did hiss once—only *once*, sir, believe me—but we have tried to atone this week. Don't be hard on us, and do please come again *soon*!"

This invitation has since been accepted, with the most gratifying result. Two performances, and money turned away at each performance.

Disagreeable as his first experience was, Chevalier is grateful to those who afforded him the opportunity

of gaining it. The various managers offered every assistance in their power; but even the following lines (heralding his arrival, and displayed on the bills of a music hall where he was engaged in one of the above-mentioned towns):

"NOW'S YOUR OPPORTUNITY!

"It may be years before he comes again!!

"PRICES FROM 2d.!!!"

failed to overcome prejudice, and to draw the class of audience Chevalier now so successfully appeals to, and caters for, in places like St. George's Hall, Liverpool; St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow; George Street Hall, Edinburgh; Guildhall, Plymouth; etc. Chevalier has a great respect for the prophetic genius who thought out the italicised portion of the above announcement.

"FOLLY TO BE WISE."—*Shakespeare.*

AIR: "SALLY IN OUR ALLEY."

In Wales and in the land o'Cakes

I really *do* dread one day!

And that's the day which comes between

A Saturday and Monday,

"Nowhere have I ever enjoyed myself more than in Scotland, and Wales—*during the week.* Seriously speaking, I should advise travellers to skip the Sundays there—particularly between the hours of nine a.m. and

five p.m. What a change comes o'er the scene ! Miles of deserted streets, but for a minority of churchgoers. What a contrast to the preceding Saturday—and this Saturday night what a satire on the compulsory closing act ! During the 'Squire' tour, I visited Cardiff for the first time. Bucalossi and I had engaged (in advance) some apartments, where there was a piano. On our arrival (Sunday evening), the old landlady—seeing me with a violin case and Bucalossi 'all over' music—nervously asked, 'if we were going to play ? She could not allow comic songs on the Sabbath.' I immediately expressed great horror at the suggestion, and told her that we made it a rule to travel with music, specially composed for Sundays at home. The old dame there and then accepted my invitation, settled herself in an arm-chair, while Bucalossi and I religiously went through a selection from—if I remember rightly—'Manteaux Noirs' (his father's opera,) and 'Rip Van Winkle.' When we had finished, the old lady assured us 'that she had never listened to any *sacred* music which had given her more real pleasure !' "

IV.

A LATTER DAY REVERIE.

December days are here. The dawns come in white mists like ashen faces seen through thin frosty hair ; the hours of light are few, and hardly a speck of colour breaks the surrounding greyness, only the dark hollies and evergreens that will stand mute sentries through the long winter watches. The flower-beds are naked, and the trees have shed their last leaves and wearily wave their gaunt arms in the desolate air. The hand of death is upon another year of time, and——

Robins !—Yes, here they come trooping over the cold dew-wet lawn—six, eight, twelve, thirteen of them—a baker's dozen exactly. Come along then, here are some crumbs for you. Bless me ! one little red-breasted fellow has perched himself upon the pinnacle of the fountain, and eyes me with cool impudence as if he were saying, or chirping, to himself, "I'm King o' the Castle !" You young vagabond, if it were not for ruf-

fling those crimson feathers of yours I'd turn the water on. How dare you monopolise the fountain ! Well—well—here's a crumb for you. You don't want it, eh ? Humph ! poor humanity cannot afford to be so confoundedly independent. Good morning !

The crumbs of experience make a philosophical meal. But I must not waste time in composing epigrams ; this book has to be finished [pretty nearly time, I fancy I can hear Chevalier saying]. Very well, sir, but I am loth to leave you yet. When I commenced I had my doubts about our powers of endurance, but they have grown with the book, and now, I don't like leaving the task.

The day wears on to twilight—profound and still. It is the hour for thought, and perhaps Chevalier may be casting a retrospective glance at this moment down the years that are gone, back to the defunct Prince of Wales's Theatre, in Tottenham Street, and his memory may once more conjure up pleasant phantoms all enacting in mimic show their parts of that day when “ Mr. Knight ” made his debut on the dramatic stage.

And then, perchance he may silently review the years of struggle, of ambitions, and of heart-burnings, with no touch of bitterness, as Mnemosyne with gentle hand leads him down to the days of consummation,

which it is safe to say, no man more deservedly gained.

* * * * *

Christmas has been and gone : the old year 1894 has passed into history. The new year has come with snow and storm, wreck and death ; the "prevailing epidemic" is abroad, and almost every day some well-known figure drops into the dark silence. Subtly, suddenly, the Comic Spirit of London's St. George's Hall is veiled with the awful mask of tragedy, and the last of the historic entertainers at that institution is no more. Poor Corney Grain has followed soon in the wake of his friend and partner, Alfred German Reed, and to complete the catastrophe the latter's aged mother has gone the way of flesh. Professor Blackie, too, that splendid Scotsman, whose presence at one of Chevalier's entertainments at Edinburgh was a welcome encouragement to the artist's work, has "aspired the clouds."

A melancholy opening to the drama of ninety-five !

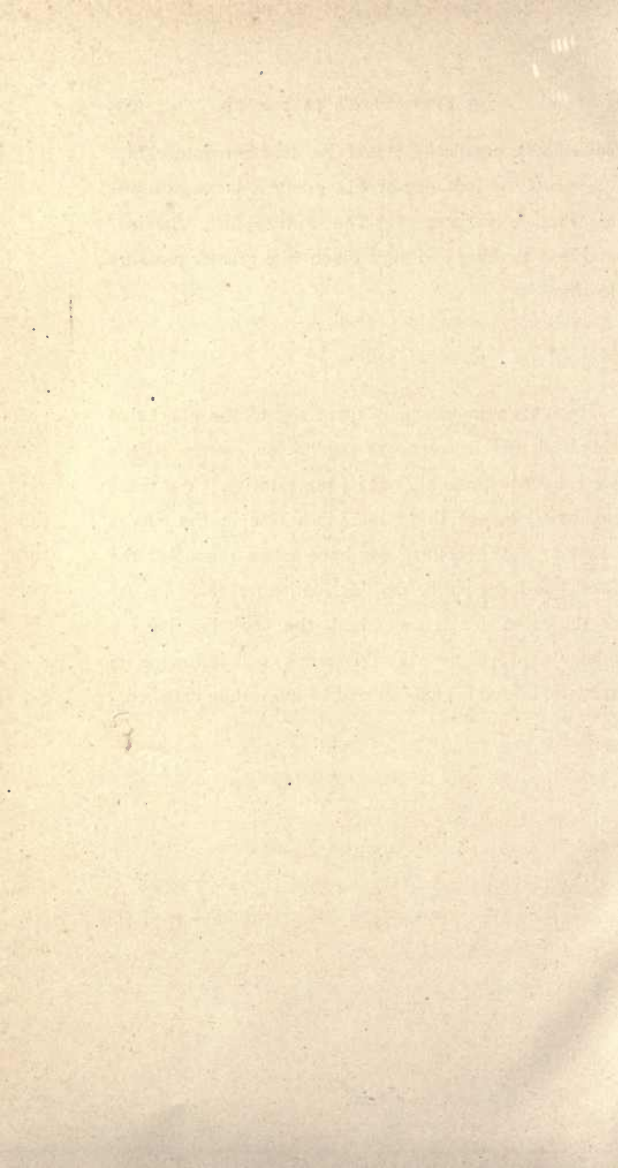
I cannot close without mentioning that Chevalier held Corney Grain in very high esteem. The feeling was entirely reciprocal ; the graceful satirist having on more than one occasion paid a public tribute to our

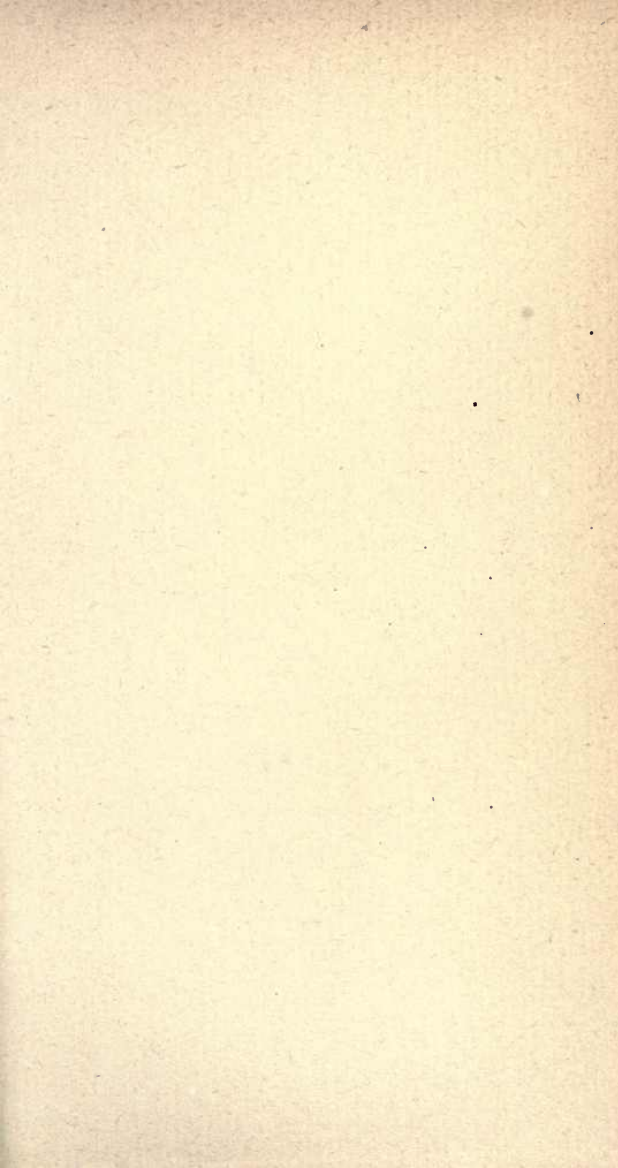
comedian's popularity ; and he told an interviewer quite recently that one of his greatest successes was his French version of "The Future Mrs. 'Awkins," and that nothing had ever given him greater pleasure to sing.

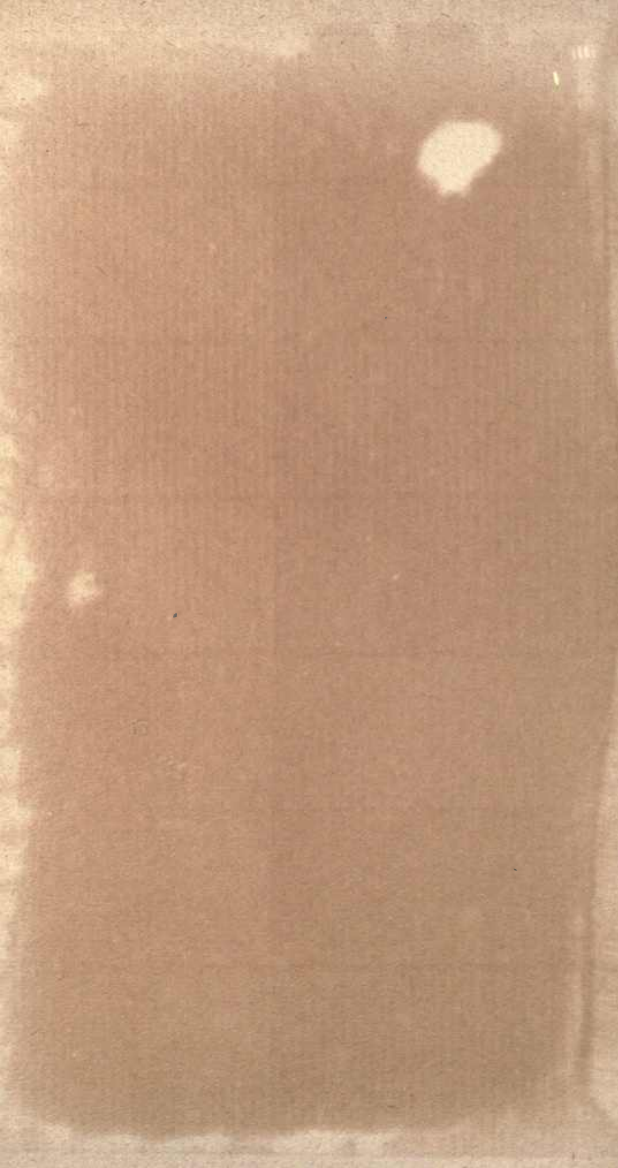
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Upon an announcement appearing to the effect that this book was in course of publication, certain papers were disturbed and alleged its prematurity. We make no answer except that "there is a tide in the affairs of men." We believe we have taken ours "at the flood," and the public shall decide its fortune. So far as the chronicler is concerned, the book has been a labour of love, and if this spirit will influence its readers, he and his subject will be more than satisfied.

FINIS.







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